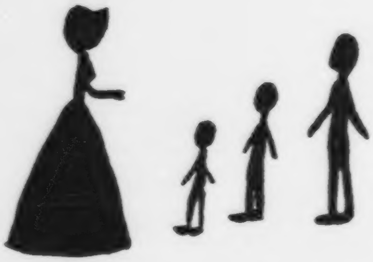
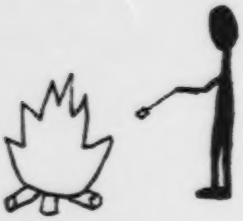
Environment Canada
Parks Service
Environnement Canada
Service des parcs

Selected Readings on the VISITOR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS





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READINGS ON THE VISITOR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS (VAMP)

1. Tayler, G. 1990
   "The Visitor Management Process" in Towards Serving Visitors and Managing Our Resources, Proceedings of a North American Workshop on Visitor Management in Parks and Protected Areas, Tourism Research and Education Centre, University of Waterloo and Environment Canada, Parks Service.

2. Graham, Robert. Per Nilsen, Robert Payne. 1987
   "Visitor Activity Planning and Management in Canadian National Parks: Marketing Within a Context of Integration" from Social Science in Natural Resource Management Systems, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado.

3. Graham, R., P. Nilsen, R.J. Payne. 1988
   "Visitor Management in Canadian National Parks" in Tourism Management, March 1988.

4. Graham, R. 1990
   "Visitor Management and Canada's National Parks" in Towards Serving Visitors and Managing Our Resources, Proceedings of a North American Workshop on Visitor Management in Parks and Protected Areas, Tourism Research and Education Centre, University of Waterloo and Environment Canada, Parks Service.

5. Ashley, Robert. 1990
   "The Visitor Activity Management Process and Canadian National Historic Parks and Sites: A New Commitment to the Visitor" in Towards Serving Visitors and Managing Our Resources, Proceedings of a North American Workshop on Visitor Management in Parks and Protected Areas, Tourism Research and Education Centre, University of Waterloo and Environment Canada, Parks Service.

6. Reynolds, R.J. 1990
   "VAMP and its Application to Camping: The Glacier National Park Example" in Towards Serving Visitors and Managing Our Resources, Proceedings of a North American Workshop on Visitor Management in Parks and Protected Areas, Tourism Research and Education Centre, University of Waterloo and Environment Canada, Parks Service.

7. Feick, J. 1988
   "Planning to Improve Service to Visitors in Canada's National Parks" in Heritage Interpretation, Vol.2, The Visitor Experience, Bellhaven Press.

(January, 1991)

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THE VISITOR MANAGEMENT PROCESS

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THE EVOLUTION OF VAMP

The origins of VAMP are rooted in the planning and development of Interpretation Services in national parks during the 1960's and 1970's. Interpretation planners and managers during this period were concerned about providing meaningful experiences to visitors in appropriate settings through selected media.

Three problems weakened these efforts.

1. What is a meaningful experience?
2. What does the visitor really need?
3. How do we justify proposed interpretation services?

There were many plans that were only partially implemented, or approved in principle and never implemented, simply because the three above concerns were not addressed to management's satisfaction.

Interpretation Services was not alone. Similar questions were being asked about management planning and the management of resources.

By the late 1970's considerable pressure was exerted to formalize the management planning process. An approved process for park management planning was developed and implemented in tandem with a natural resources management process. The missing piece was the decision framework for managing visitor opportunities.

The missing piece was needed because:

1. There was no basic, overall approach to the selection and management of visitor opportunities in a decentralized organization with many functions responsible for planning, development, and delivery;

2. Services and facilities were being developed individually instead of as an integrated package of services geared to visitors;

3. We could not measure the effectiveness of our services in meeting public needs and expectations;

4. Our basic data was incomplete and only partially organized.

The basic concept to address visitor opportunities was developed and approved in 1981, with the direction to continue development and testing within existing resources and priorities. Test projects which focused upon the development and delivery of services were initiated in three of our regions. Several management planning initiatives were also monitored to assess how the concept would be applied during management planning.

We sought advice and assistance from many people, agencies and the research community. In Canada we exchanged views and information with Tourism Canada, the provincial park systems (especially in Ontario and Alberta), and with universities, including the University of Waterloo, Acadia and the University of Ottawa.

The conclusions of this work were summarized in a manual and approval to implement was given in 1985.

The most important decision in the early 1980's was to build the process by concentrating upon visitor activities instead of opportunities and experiences. The rationale was that, within our organization, there was little support for decisions based upon very soft opportunity or experience. Managers could relate to "what people do" or visitor activities. However, the grand scheme was to ensure that the decisions would eventually be made upon an opportunity/experience base.

THE BASIC PROCESS

The basic thought process is outlined in Figure 1. Its application to management of visitor programmes follows the traditional approach to planning used by most resource management agencies (Figure 2). The manual takes this process and applies it to the five stages of the park management process: park establishment, new park management planning, established park planning, and facility development and operation.

The 1985 manual presents a framework and says a lot about what needs to be done, but does not say very much about how.

A major emphasis throughout each stage of the process is to start by gaining an understanding of who comes to the park, why they come, what they do when they are there, and what their needs are.

FIGURE 1

THE BASIC VAMP CONCEPT

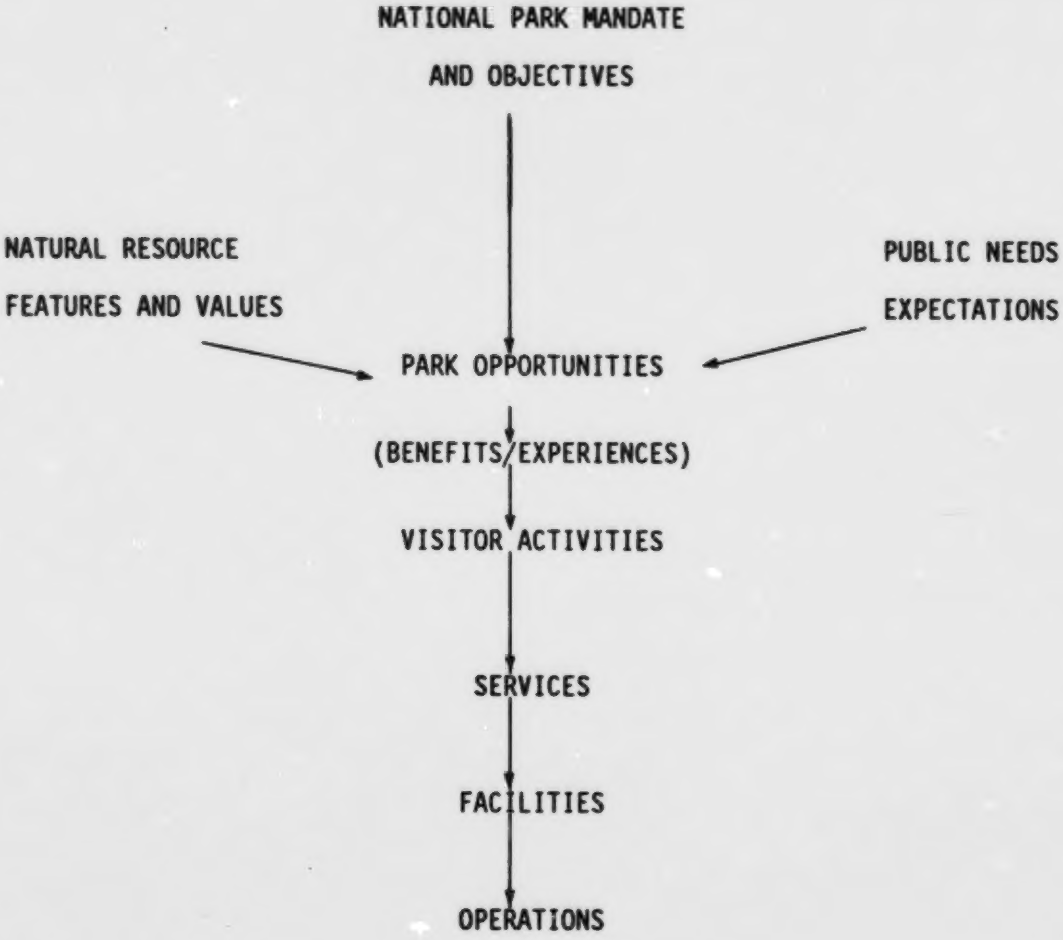
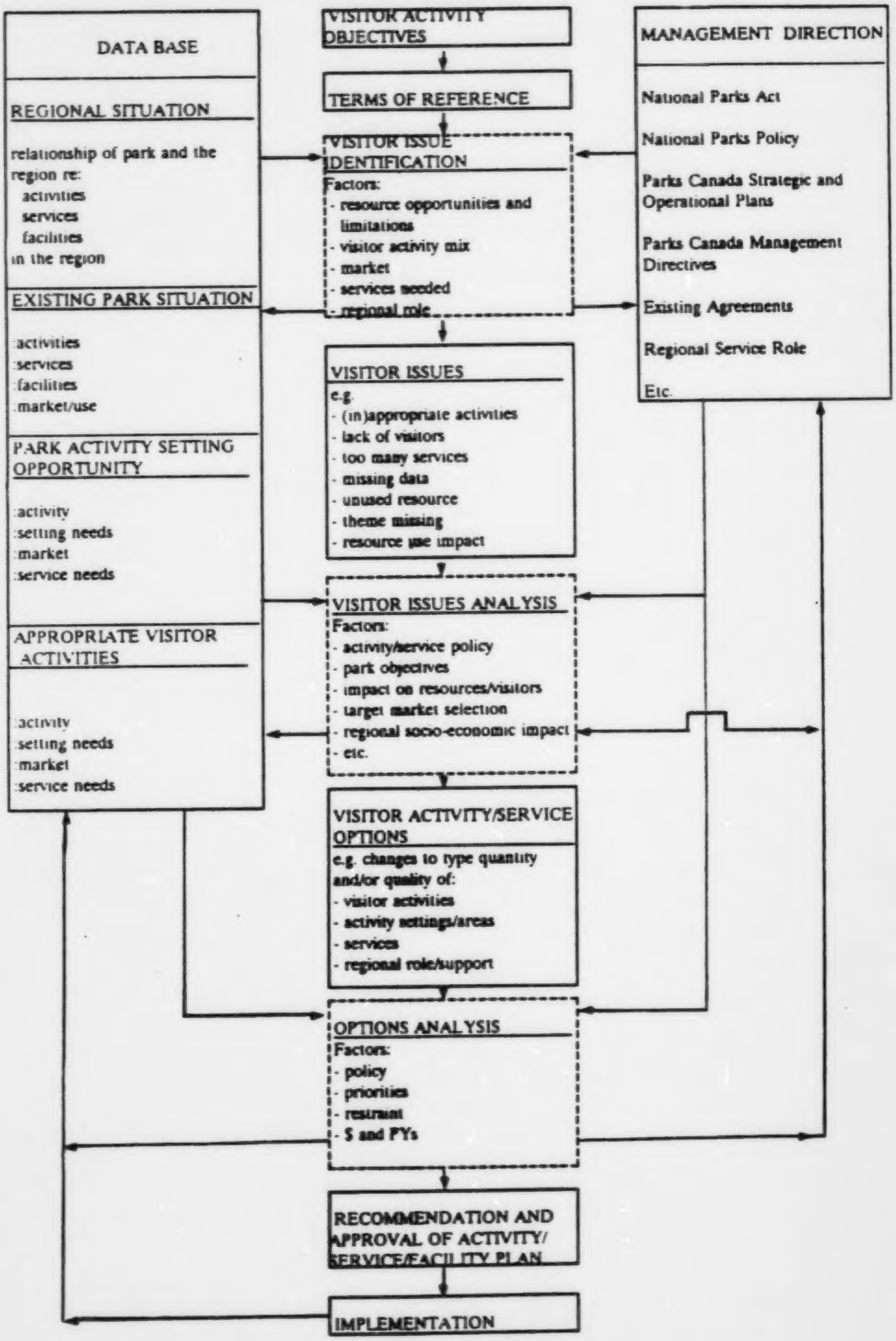

NATIONAL PARK MANDATE
AND OBJECTIVES
NATURAL RESOURCE
FEATURES AND VALUES
PUBLIC NEEDS
EXPECTATIONS
PARK OPPORTUNITIES
(BENEFITS/EXPERIENCES)
VISITOR ACTIVITIES
SERVICES
FACILITIES
OPERATIONS

FIGURE 2

GENERIC REPRESENTATION OF VAMP


DATA BASE
REGIONAL SITUATION
relationship of park and the region re:
activities
services
facilities
in the region
EXISTING PARK SITUATION
:activities
:services
:facilities
:market/use
PARK ACTIVITY SETTING OPPORTUNITY
:activity
:setting needs
:market
:service needs
APPROPRIATE VISITOR ACTIVITIES
:activity
:setting needs
:market
:service needs
VISITOR ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES
TERMS OF REFERENCE
VISITOR ISSUE IDENTIFICATION
Factors:
- resource opportunities and limitations
- visitor activity mix
- market
- services needed
- regional role
VISITOR ISSUES
e.g.
- (in)appropriate activities
- lack of visitors
- too many services
- missing data
- unused resource
- theme missing
- resource use impact
VISITOR ISSUES ANALYSIS
Factors:
- activity/service policy
- park objectives
- impact on resources/visitors
- target market selection
- regional socio-economic impact
- etc.
VISITOR ACTIVITY/SERVICE OPTIONS
e.g. changes to type quantity and/or quality of:
- visitor activities
- activity settings/areas
- services
- regional role/support
OPTIONS ANALYSIS
Factors:
- policy
- priorities
- restraint
- $ and PYs
RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL OF ACTIVITY/ SERVICE/FACILITY PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION
MANAGEMENT DIRECTION
National Parks Act
National Parks Policy
Parks Canada Strategic and Operational Plans
Parks Canada Management Directives
Existing Agreements
Regional Service Role
Etc.

The task is to determine the current situation when comparing the park's expectations to the visitor's, and then to assess the actual activity or offer in terms of services, their use and visitor satisfaction.

At the management planning level, the issues relate to the purpose and role of the park, the type and location of appropriate visitor activities, the market for the activities, and the relationship of the park to its surrounding regions.

At the service planning level the issues focus upon the immediate future in terms of targeted markets and activities, the services needed, and how the services can be delivered.

APPLICATION TO MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS

As noted earlier, there are five opportunities to begin to implement the process in management (see Figure 3). Since our most pressing need was to see where we are at the park delivery level and to improve current services to current visitors, we concentrated upon park service planning and in 1987 produced a handbook, appropriately titled "Getting Started: A Guide to Park Service Planning", developed a training package geared to park management teams, and launched the park service planning programme.

The Service Planning Process is outlined in Figure 4. A description of the seven steps to Service Planning is illustrated in Figure 5.

The approach is "hands on" by park staff, assisted by regional and headquarters staff. The first test plans were produced here in Ontario's national parks in 1987 and 1988. There are now 18 plans in various stages of production. We expect to have some completed plans, based on the handbook, available in the spring of 1989.

Here are some specific thoughts about the application of the process to park service planning.

1. We were accused in 1985 of creating a process that demanded a lot of new information. In fact, our early tests were research hungry. However, our practical experience showed that a lot of data was already available in existing studies, our own statistics, the knowledge of participants, and the collective knowledge of park staff. The first step was to organize this data in a cumulative way to determine what we know, what we don't know, and what we need to know. Using this approach and tying our data needs to agreed upon issues has helped us to refocus our visitor studies in order to start filling the gaps.

2. The use of a process for the first time has to allow for overkill. A facilitator is needed to move staff along through the various stages.

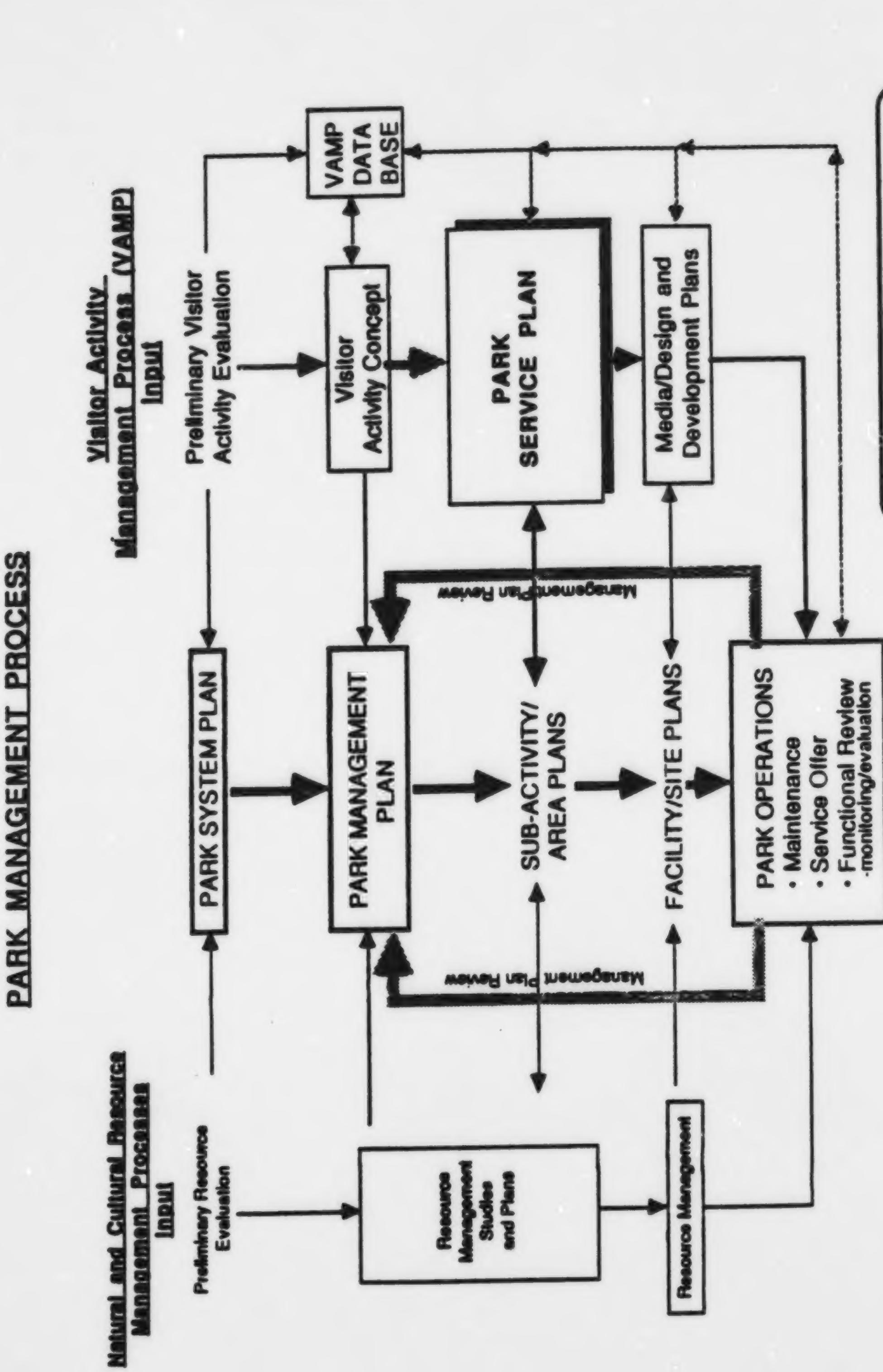

PARK MANAGEMENT PROCESS
Visitor Activity Management Process (VAMP) Input
Preliminary Visitor Activity Evaluation
VAMP DATA BASE
Visitor Activity Concept
PARK SERVICE PLAN
Media/Design and Development Plans
Natural and Cultural Resource Management Processes Input
Preliminary Resource Evaluation
Resource Management Studies and Plans
Resource Management
PARK SYSTEM PLAN
PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN
SUB-ACTIVITY/ AREA PLANS
FACILITY/SITE PLANS
PARK OPERATIONS
• Maintenance
• Service Offer
• Functional Review
-monitoring/evaluation
Management Plan Review
Management Plan Review

Figure: 3

VISITOR ACTIVITY INPUT IN THE PARK PLANNING PROCESS

FIGURE 4

PARK SERVICE PLANNING PROCESS

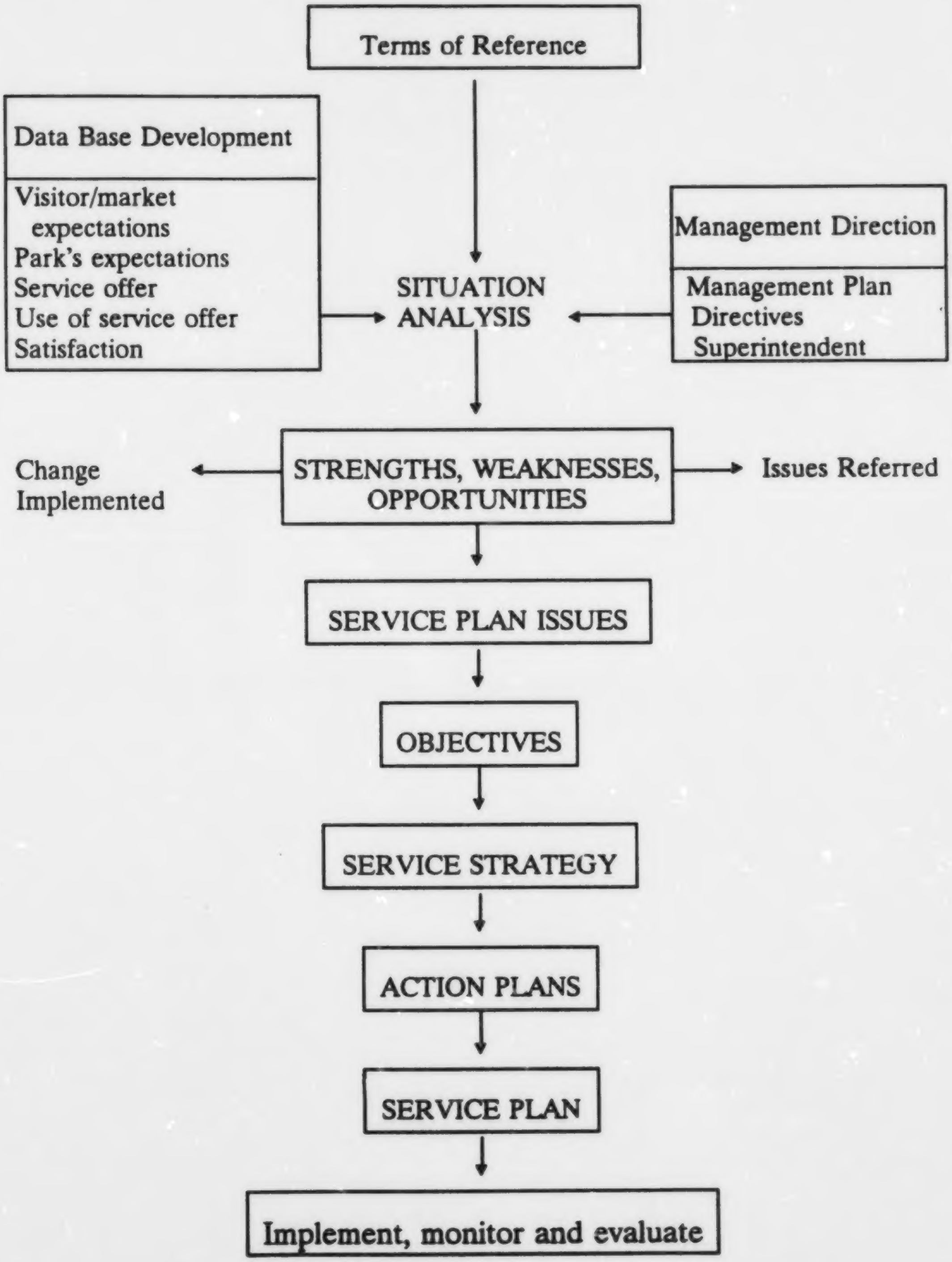

Terms of Reference
Data Base Development
Visitor/market expectations
Park's expectations
Service offer
Use of service offer
Satisfaction
SITUATION ANALYSIS
Management Direction
Management Plan
Directives
Superintendent
Change Implemented
STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES
Issues Referred
SERVICE PLAN ISSUES
OBJECTIVES
SERVICE STRATEGY
ACTION PLANS
SERVICE PLAN
Implement, monitor and evaluate

FIGURE 5

STEPS OF SERVICE PLANNING

Park Service Planning is a logical thought process which has seven basic steps.

1. **PRODUCE A TERMS OF REFERENCE**
First you must decide and describe what you are going to do and how, who is going to do the work and when.

2. **DEVELOP THE DATA BASE AND COMPLETE A SITUATION ANALYSIS**
Through development of a data base, you should learn enough about the situation to compare what is provided (the current offer); with what should be provided (based on the needs and expectations of visitors and park mandate); to identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

3. **ORGANIZE, IDENTIFY AND PRIORIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES AND ISSUES**
Strengths, weaknesses and opportunities should be rolled up into opportunities and issues, then further organized, identified and priorized by service category requirements.

4. **ESTABLISH SERVICE OBJECTIVES**
Objectives are one of the most important parts of any plan. You will need to organize existing objectives and develop measurable Service Objectives related to the broad program. To prepare for the next step, you will also need to set specific objectives for change.

5. **DEVELOP A SERVICE STRATEGY AND PLAN**
At this stage you develop a service strategy that includes a current and future offer, and plans of action for changes. It then needs to be rolled up into an overall strategy so management can see what it looks like.

6. **WRITE THE SERVICE PLAN AND OBTAIN APPROVALS**
Getting the whole thing down on paper involves integrating some of the earlier products of the service planning process. Review and approvals are an integral part of this step.

7. **IMPLEMENT, MONITOR, EVALUATE AND UPDATE PLAN**

Otherwise they will be overcome by detail. The greatest benefits, however, are team-building, decision building, a strengthening of the common understanding that grows among park staff, and an increased willingness to work together to provide quality visitor service.

3. The absence of consistent direction at the management planning level is an issue. The need for a clear vision or mission is brought out as specific issues that need to be addressed during the next management plan review. Our first plans only deal with existing opportunities and existing visitor activity groups.

Here are a few more detailed comments about the use of the handbook.

SEGMENTATION

In the Service Planning Handbook is an introductory discussion about the importance of visitor/market segmentation in order to base the analysis upon known visitor needs, expectations, and patterns of use. The original premise of the process, based upon where we were in terms of development within the organization, was to base the segmentation more upon "what people do" as opposed to "why people come" or "what they need". The reason for this was to begin by focusing upon the service/activity/market relationship at the park level. The eventual objective is to move toward opportunity/experience definition as we develop the criteria, the approach, and the needed information.

Most national parks now producing park service plans have developed visitor segments or Visitor Activity Groups (VAG's)[1] that are half way between categories of activities and experience-related visitor segments. However, each VAG is based upon known information and criteria that are significant in terms of setting, activity mix, skill levels, and basic services. In the handbook we have not provided parks with a pre-determined formula for segmentation. Our hope for the future is that national and regional marketing initiatives, combined with our experience in park service planning, will provide us with relevant criteria that should be used to determine visitor segments.

PROFILING

Once you have decided "who comes to your park and for what reasons", the next step is to put yourself and your management team in the visitor's shoes so that you can begin to find out more specifically what you know and what you don't know about their needs, expectations, and activities. Because we do not have the luxury of primary research at a park-by-park level, the team creates the first profiles of data, noting the sources and validity of the information. In some cases, parks have been able to use a contract to gather, synthesize and organize known data for the park management team. In others, the team has used existing information, synthesized it and noted the data gaps which may need to be filled at a later stage.

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[1] Visitor Activity Groups for Kootenay National Park, for example, include pleasure drivers, swimmers (hot pool), heritage appreciation visitors, front country campers, and wilderness adventurers.

The outline of a profile described in the handbook is shown in Figure 6. The profile calls for a definition which is based upon the criteria used to create the segment, followed by an elaboration of significant characteristics, the likely benefits that the group may be seeking and then their needs and expectations in terms of their trip pattern to the park. There is a need to capture trend data and concerns that managers are likely to identify at this stage.

We encourage staff to begin by producing thumbnail sketches since they will be adding new data as they move through the planning cycle.

THE PARK'S EXPECTATIONS

In our organization, management expectations come in many forms, from many sources - policies, directives, priorities, agreements, management plans, and so on. The park teams have found this diversity to be one of the most frustrating parts of the exercise. Our park management plans are not very strong in providing direction for establishing visitor opportunities, the role of the park in its socio-economic region, or the range of activities that are appropriate, etc. Despite this, the team may end up with several hundred direction-type statements. The key individual at this point is the park superintendent, who must help the team to sort out what is significant. The team's task is to sort out the direction to see what applies to the Visitor Activity Groups and to the categories of services.

Equally important is the confirmation and siting of the park's heritage values, themes, etc., which can be pulled from our interpretation plans of the 1970's. These are park expectations.

In addition, there are assessments of resource fragility or use impact that have to be noted and mapped. The limitations of the setting are major resource management concerns and they are addressed through our Natural Resource Management Process.

CURRENT OFFER

The major problem in organizing this information is to line up our service offer with the Visitor Activity Groups and the categories of services. In most instances we have descriptions of the purpose of a facility, but we may not know whether the service offered is for one, two, or more groups. The matching of current offer to VAG's is creating some surprises such as the absence of interpretation services for some key visitors.

The second major concern is the identification of services that are important to each VAG but are offered by others (stakeholders) such as enroute information, visitor reception and orientation, and special services (e.g. accommodation, food, gasoline, etc.). They are all important components of the VAG's trip service package and are necessary to a satisfactory experience.

USE OF OFFER

We have a lot of statistics pertaining to park entry, use of campgrounds, trails, interpretation services, etc. Since we want to be able to match the use of offer to park management expectations and to visitor needs and expectations, we need to re-organize the data that we have to tease out the extent of usage by each VAG according to service. Since we are creating our first versions of these plans, the teams have been able to identify relative use at a gross level. Once again, however, if the data are not reliable, their weaknesses are noted before considering any further change.

It is difficult to obtain data about the use of services provided by other agencies, the private sector, cooperative arrangements, etc. But just identifying who they are as well as their relationships to visitors is a major step. In the longer term this information should be gathered and used in a broader regional marketing strategy.

SATISFACTION

At this point in development we are asking parks to pull together all of the existing indicators, such as letters of congratulation or complaint, visitor comments relayed to staff, recent park visitor surveys, regional studies, national visitor activity profiles, and so on. As we improve our monitoring and evaluation system, including market assessments, we will be better able to respond.

Even with the skeletal information that we have, management teams have been able to identify some of the strengths of our offer and where there are indications of dissatisfaction with specific services.

ANALYSIS AND DETERMINING PRIORITIES

An analysis of the relationship between visitor needs and expectations, our expectations, the role of third parties and the availability and use of the opportunities provided can lead to a great list of needed improvements or actions. Some can be handled immediately, while others require new actions needing policy, planning or financial resources. The key is to build on the identified strengths of the services, the opportunities that are there and the objectives and priorities that have already been set.

FIGURE 6

VISITOR ACTIVITY GROUP PROFILE

Visitor Activity Group: (title)

Definition:

Activity Description: (setting, timing, skills and equipment required)

Market Characteristics: (origin, age, education, party size and type)

Benefits and Experience Sought: (setting, motivation, style of visit)

Activity and Service Requirements (from a visitor's point of view)

Awareness/Extension:
- awareness of existence and benefits of park or site

Pretrip:
- motivation for and information to plan trip

Enroute:
- orientation information

Reception:
- welcoming, orientation to site, information

Park Activities:

1. - heritage presentation
   - recreational/educational opportunities
2. - access/transportation
   - accommodation/sustenance
   - sanitation
   - administration/management
   - resource protection/public safety
3. - reinforcement

Departure:
- departure information
- evaluation

Trends:

Concerns: - from a user/activity perspective
- from a management perspective

Management Action to Date:

Two things happen at this stage. The first is that the team sees the complete service needs for each VAG and the current status of the service offer. They see how interpretation meshes with visitor reception, public safety, accommodation, and the rest of the recreational service package. There is also an agreement about the nature of the experiences to be provided and the basic service that each VAG should have.

The second is the return to reality and the realization that the park can only achieve a few of the major changes that have been identified.

But the team collectively determines what the service objectives will be and what corrective actions can be undertaken now using existing resources and through changes in scheduling or shifts in service. The bigger weaknesses and opportunities need to be prioritized with the park superintendent to see what should be addressed during management plan review or through the rest of the park service planning programme.

OPTIONS/STRATEGIES/IMPLEMENTATION

The rest of the plan programme follows the usual plan development, review, approval, and format. Even though we are in a period of severe restraint, and we urge that plans be realistic in terms of a five-year programme, the options phase provides management with flexibility in terms of strategy and implementation.

MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Remember that park service planning is only one cycle in our overall management process and that it can be used to assist in management plan review. But the thought process based on the model also needs to be applied during the park management planning programme. The concerns for creation of visitor opportunities are very basic: in terms of the park's heritage values, its purpose and objectives (mandate), and the expectations and needs of existing/new visitors, we must determine what are the opportunities the park presents for visitors to experience their heritage through a range of appropriate activities and while asking "Where in the park?" and "Under what conditions?"

We are now using the park service planning cycle as a way of preparing for management plan review and update. The issues relating to "What opportunities through what activities?", "What role for the park in its region?", "Where in the park?", and "Under what conditions?" are easily identified and are leading to more conceptual long-term plans.

READINGS ON THE VISITOR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS (VAMP)

2. Graham, Robert. Per Nilsen, Robert Payne. 1987

"Visitor Activity Planning and Management in Canadian National Parks: Marketing Within a Context of Integration" from Social Science in Natural Resource Management Systems, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado.

VISITOR ACTIVITY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT IN CANADIAN NATIONAL PARKS: MARKETING WITHIN A CONTEXT OF INTEGRATION

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The legislated mandate of Environment Canada, Parks[1] is to protect for all time those places which are significant examples of Canada's national and cultural heritage and also to promote public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of heritage in ways which leave the park or heritage site unimpaired for future generations (Parks Canada 1979a). The mandate is implemented through a network of national parks, historic parks, heritage canals, co-operative heritage areas and heritage rivers. There are currently 32 terrestrial national parks consisting of approximately 140,000 square kilometers (1.3 percent of the Canadian land mass). A policy to guide the implementation of National Marine Parks in 29 marine areas in the Arctic, Atlantic, Pacific and Great Lakes environments was recently approved (Environment Canada, Parks 1986).

Care of the physical, biological, cultural and historic resources in a national park is the primary concern or mandate of Parks. Among Canadians there is strong support for the continuation of national park programs and the mandate of Parks, but familiarity and use of national parks are not nearly as broadly based a phenomenon as was previously expected (Parks Canada 1984e). A recent government analysis (Neilsen Task Force Report 1986) recognizes the importance of these programs but suggests changes in the quantity and quality of service to the public. Concerns about the visitor, support facilities and related social and economic impacts are becoming significant as concerns about the resource. In 1983, socioeconomic analysis in management plans for national parks became an integral part of the park planning process (Parks Canada 1983, and Val This Volume). The socioeconomic analysis includes the effects of social and economic factors on visitor use, traditional use and regional integration which are relevant to the park's management plan. Examples of social and economic factors include population growth, mobility, recreation patterns, employment, income and economic base of the protected area undergoing either designation as a new national park, development of a management plan, or a 5-year review of an existing management plan.

The requirement in the mandate to protect heritage resources led Parks Canada to develop substantial objective data about natural and cultural resources within park boundaries but little about the dimensions and nature of human use. Canadian national park planning has reflected that protection bias with the result that issues related to the mix of opportunities, activities, services and facilities were neither well analyzed nor taken seriously. In practical terms, management action in national parks suffered. Facilities were located where they should not have been; mixed messages were sometimes given to visitors; facilities were sometimes too large or too small. Visitor activities evolved and Parks reacted without managing the explosive growth in recreation and leisure (Parks Canada 1982, 1984f, 1985a and b, Payne and Graham 1984, and Payne, Graham and Nilsen 1986).

A reawakening to the requirements of the mandate to consider both visitor issues and protection of heritage resources led to the development of the Visitor Activity Management Process (VAMP) (Parks Canada 1984b). VAMP provides a framework to ensure that visitor understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the resources--the other side of the mandate--is just as carefully and systematically considered in the selection of new national parks or review of management plans for existing parks as protection for the natural resources. It is important to state that VAMP does not stand alone.

VAMP operates within a strong planning and management context as it represents how social science data are integrated within the National Parks Management Planning Process (Parks Canada 1986a) in Canada.

By connecting visitor opportunities and demands within the context of National Park Policy (1979) and National Marine Park Policy (1986), VAMP identifies the appropriate mix of opportunities, activities, services and facilities which may be provided in a national park. The VAMP framework is an appropriate response to the agency's mandate and strives to end the myth that a park can be all things to all people.

In the sections that follow, we briefly introduce Environment Canada, Parks' VAMP, illustrate its application through two case studies and conclude with a discussion which raises questions about aspects of VAMP's implementation in Canadian national parks.

VISITOR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Evolution of the Process

In the late 1960s and for some years afterwards, Parks Canada, like many national protected-area agencies, underwent tremendous growth (Harrison *et al.* 1982). During this growth period there appeared to be little need or time to manage the tension between the resource and the user. Most of the person-years and budget allocations were directed to expansion of the national park system. Meanwhile, non-governmental organizations and academics had turned their attention to the need for a planning system which would rationalize the policy objectives of preservation and use with operational management in the parks. Parks Canada had begun the development of Provisional Master Plans to describe existing and possible future park situations. These plans were dependent on natural resource information with little or no emphasis on the social sciences. Moreover, during this era, provincial and local tourist agencies began to advertise the natural splendor of national parks and the underlying theme that a park could meet all the needs of a complex public.

Parks' staff professionals began to openly express the feeling that the classic approach of educating the masses was not effectively presenting the agency's mandate, image and messages. Beginning in 1970, and culminating in 1975, a federal-provincial task force on interpretation attempted to answer the question: "What is wrong with interpretation and visitor services in parks?" The task force recommended a communications strategy based on marketing. Product definition was expressed in terms of resource values; market segmentation was based on definition of potential users, their behaviors and their needs; and organization/agency resources were based on mandates, management systems, staffing and finances. It was urged that:

> ... we must identify market segments, so that we can design communication systems that will reach each visitor segment before, during and after they [*sic*] have enjoyed parks (Federal-Provincial Parks Conference 1975:11).

At the same time, Parks Canada developed an Interpretation Planning Process. Unfortunately, the direction established by the federal-provincial task force was overlooked, and there was no attempt to link interpretation and visitor services directly to the agency's proposed Park Management Planning Process (Parks Canada 1975).

Subtle organizational changes within Parks Canada slowly began to reflect both sides of the policy mandate. Some of these changes included the emergence of the Socio-Economic Research Division, the creation of a Natural Resource Conservation Division which began the development of a framework for analysis and management of the natural resources and formulation of the Natural Resources Management Process (Parks Canada 1978a), the development of a rational basis for additions to the parks system (Parks Canada 1972), the three-year effort to clearly define a Park Management Planning Process (1975-1978), and a 15-year effort to answer the question of how best to respond to the need for the mix of opportunities, activities, services and facilities required by visitors.

In 1970, at the Federal Provincial Parks Conference, John Farina, one of Canada's early leisure researchers, made the statement that "parks people were out of touch with the general population--while parks are for people, what people have priority?" (1970:3). He suggested that parks were only one opportunity for the public's leisure activity and that parks agencies were competing with other public/private organizations for discretionary time. Moreover, he felt that if a park agency's mandate was not clearly communicated, parks would lose their traditional public support permanently. Parks Canada was described by Farina as "inward-oriented," "traditional" and "with no vision of the future in respect to leisure and recreation." Throughout the next 9 years, internal functional reviews, program reviews and task forces continually asked: "What is Parks Canada's business" and "how is the agency's business reflected in its planning and management?" Reviewers gradually realized that visitor services staff within the parks were operating and maintaining facilities rather than managing visitor opportunities, facilitating interpretation and encouraging public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of natural and cultural heritage. Interpretation, and Visitor Services, in conjunction with the Socio-Economic Research Division, began a series of approximately 120 projects, studies, reviews of literature and meetings to formalize the visitor management component of the overall park management planning process. In an agency seemingly overloaded with management processes, another process was not greeted with open arms.

In 1979, Parks Canada selected a consultant to develop a senior management perspective on the issues related to visitor management (Brooks 1980). In the same year, Parks Canada's senior management approved and implemented a system, Project Initiation Planning System (PIPS), that required managers and planners to justify and substantiate the relationship between "ad hoc" projects and management planning (Parks Canada 1979b). Based on the 1980 Brooks report and subsequent approvals by the Program Management Committee, four draft versions of a management process for visitor activity were developed and tested to the point that nationwide staff training could begin in 1985. To date, three national training workshops and numerous regional and park-specific training efforts have been completed. An implementation strategy within current financial and human resources has been prepared.

VAMP is not a process by itself. It is a way to respond to the policy mandate and to senior management's vision of the need to be accountable and professional in decisions related to the development of recreation opportunities for heritage enjoyment. It also enables the manager to judiciously consider efficiency and effectiveness in terms of visitor opportunities and the selected markets they serve.

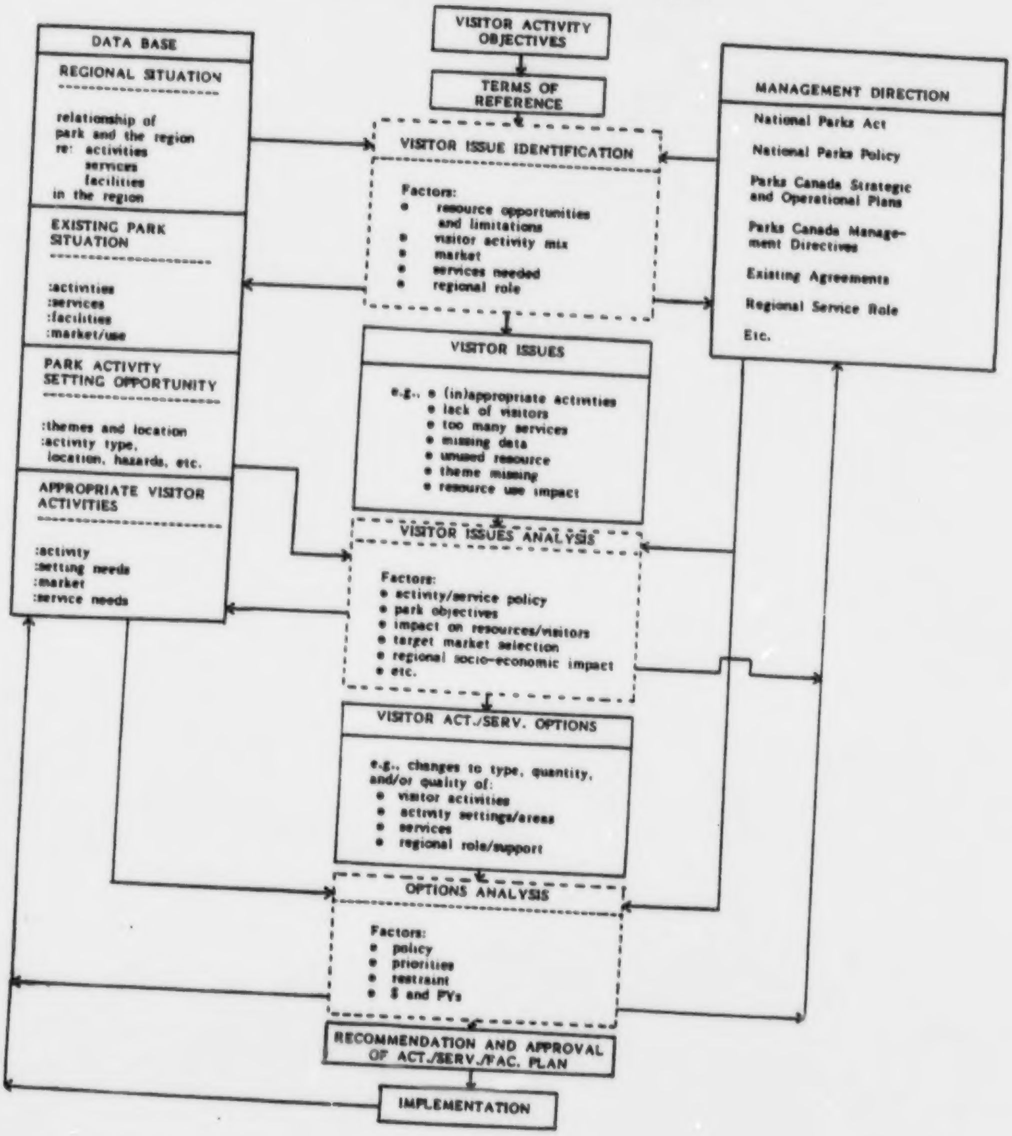
Generic Model

Parks' management planning program employs a traditional approach involving six steps: (1) objectives, (2) terms of reference, (3) database analysis, (4) concepts/options, (5) recommendations, (6) approval and implementation. This sequence is repeated for each planning cycle from new park proposals to operating park service plans (interpretation, visitor services, public safety, operations, etc.). The generic model for VAMP is depicted in Figure 1.

It must be emphasized that the VAMP model is bureaucratic in that it outlines a series of steps which must be followed and checked by management. VAMP has yet to develop the mechanisms which give a planning framework such as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) its power and internal coherence (USFS 1981, Clark and Stankey 1979, Driver and Brown 1983, Manfredo, Driver and Brown 1983).

The generic model has three components. The series of steps within which issues are identified and options advanced to deal with issues are supported by a database as well as management policy and directives.

Figure 1
GENERIC REPRESENTATION OF VAMP


VISITOR ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES
TERMS OF REFERENCE
DATA BASE
REGIONAL SITUATION
relationship of park and the region re: activities services facilities in the region
EXISTING PARK SITUATION
:activities
:services
:facilities
:market/use
PARK ACTIVITY SETTING OPPORTUNITY
:themes and location
:activity type, location, hazards, etc.
APPROPRIATE VISITOR ACTIVITIES
:activity
:setting needs
:market
:service needs
VISITOR ISSUE IDENTIFICATION
Factors:
• resource opportunities and limitations
• visitor activity mix
• market
• services needed
• regional role
MANAGEMENT DIRECTION
National Parks Act
National Parks Policy
Parks Canada Strategic and Operational Plans
Parks Canada Management Directives
Existing Agreements
Regional Service Role
Etc.
VISITOR ISSUES
e.g., • (in)appropriate activities
• lack of visitors
• too many services
• missing data
• unused resource
• theme missing
• resource use impact
VISITOR ISSUES ANALYSIS
Factors:
• activity/service policy
• park objectives
• impact on resources/visitors
• target market selection
• regional socio-economic impact
• etc.
VISITOR ACT./SERV. OPTIONS
e.g., changes to type, quantity, and/or quality of:
• visitor activities
• activity settings/areas
• services
• regional role/support
OPTIONS ANALYSIS
Factors:
• policy
• priorities
• restraint
• $ and PYs
RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL OF ACT./SERV./FAC. PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION

This point VAMP begins to exhibit its capability to specify for managers the requirements for both supply and demand information. For information about visitors and use, it is logical to begin with what is known and what can be easily determined (e.g., the regional situation). Experiential, informal and indigenous knowledge all play an important part in the process. After determining what is known about the regional situation and existing use of the (proposed) national park, information on potential visitor activity markets is compiled. Natural and cultural resource information collected through the Natural Resources Management Process is inventoried and assessed to identify resource opportunities and constraints. The inclusion of such information in VAMP helps achieve an integration between visitor use and resource protection.

The bureaucratic basis of VAMP is illustrated clearly through the role of management. Management ensures that activities are compatible with national park policy. Moreover, critical decisions are made about the level of support that activities should receive in the national parks. The importance of management direction cannot be over-emphasized: it is to VAMP what carrying capacity is to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS).

Management Contexts for Implementing VAMP

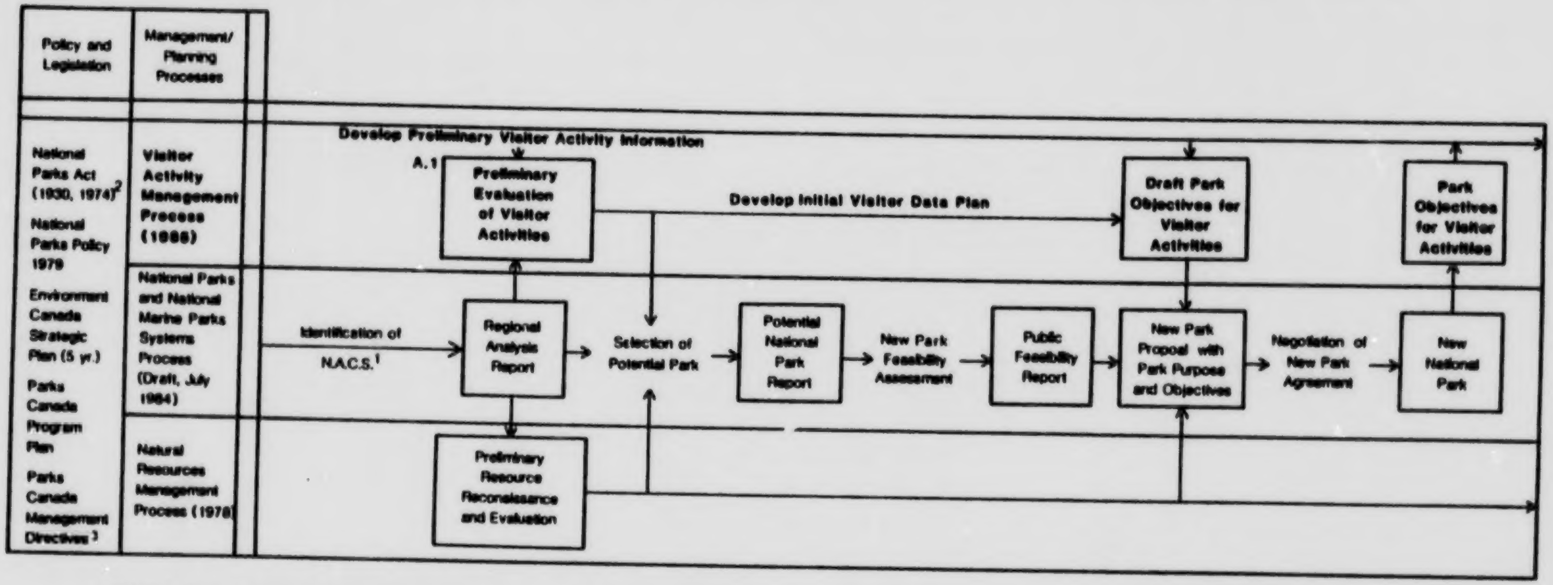
VAMP is currently being implemented in both new park proposals and in existing national parks. Implementation of VAMP in New Park Proposals (Figure 2) provides a statement termed Preliminary Evaluation of Visitor Activities (A.1). This preliminary analysis provides an understanding of the proposed park's visitor opportunities, associated market segments, local and regional socioeconomic issues and suggests preliminary development scenarios to be reviewed in a Social and Environmental Impact Assessment. By comparison, implementation of VAMP in existing national parks yields a more detailed discussion of issues and presentation of options (Figure 3). In turn, these options guide the selection of target markets, specify the public and private mix of recreation opportunities, activities, services and facilities, and guide the design and development of programs, services and facilities.

The accompanying figures also illustrate how VAMP is integrated with natural resource information by means of the National Park Management Planning Process (Parks Canada 1986a). An important component in each of the management contexts illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 is the Park Data Plan for visitor activities. It presents a specific program for the collection and updating of required relevant visitor activity data. In the past, visitor-use data were marked by confusion, inconsistent data collection procedures, and missing definitive user data, with no linkages to management planning.

Figure 2

NEW PARK PROPOSAL

Visitor Activity Management Process: Relationship To New Park Proposal Development and Other Management Processes


Policy and Legislation
Management/ Planning Processes
National Parks Act (1930, 1974)[2]
National Parks Policy 1979
Environment Canada Strategic Plan (5 yr.)
Parks Canada Program Plan
Parks Canada Management Directives[3]
Visitor Activity Management Process (1986)
National Parks and National Marine Parks Systems Process (Draft, July 1984)
Natural Resources Management Process (1978)
Develop Preliminary Visitor Activity Information
A.1
Preliminary Evaluation of Visitor Activities
Develop Initial Visitor Data Plan
Draft Park Objectives for Visitor Activities
Park Objectives for Visitor Activities
Identification of N.A.C.S.[1]
Regional Analysis Report
Selection of Potential Park
Potential National Park Report
New Park Feasibility Assessment
Public Feasibility Report
New Park Proposal with Park Purpose and Objectives
Negotiation of New Park Agreement
New National Park
Preliminary Resource Reconaissance and Evaluation

[1] N.A.C.S. Natural Area of Canadian Significance

[2] Office Consolidation. National Parks Act, 1974 (R.S.,cN-13). Ministry of Supply and Services, 1978.

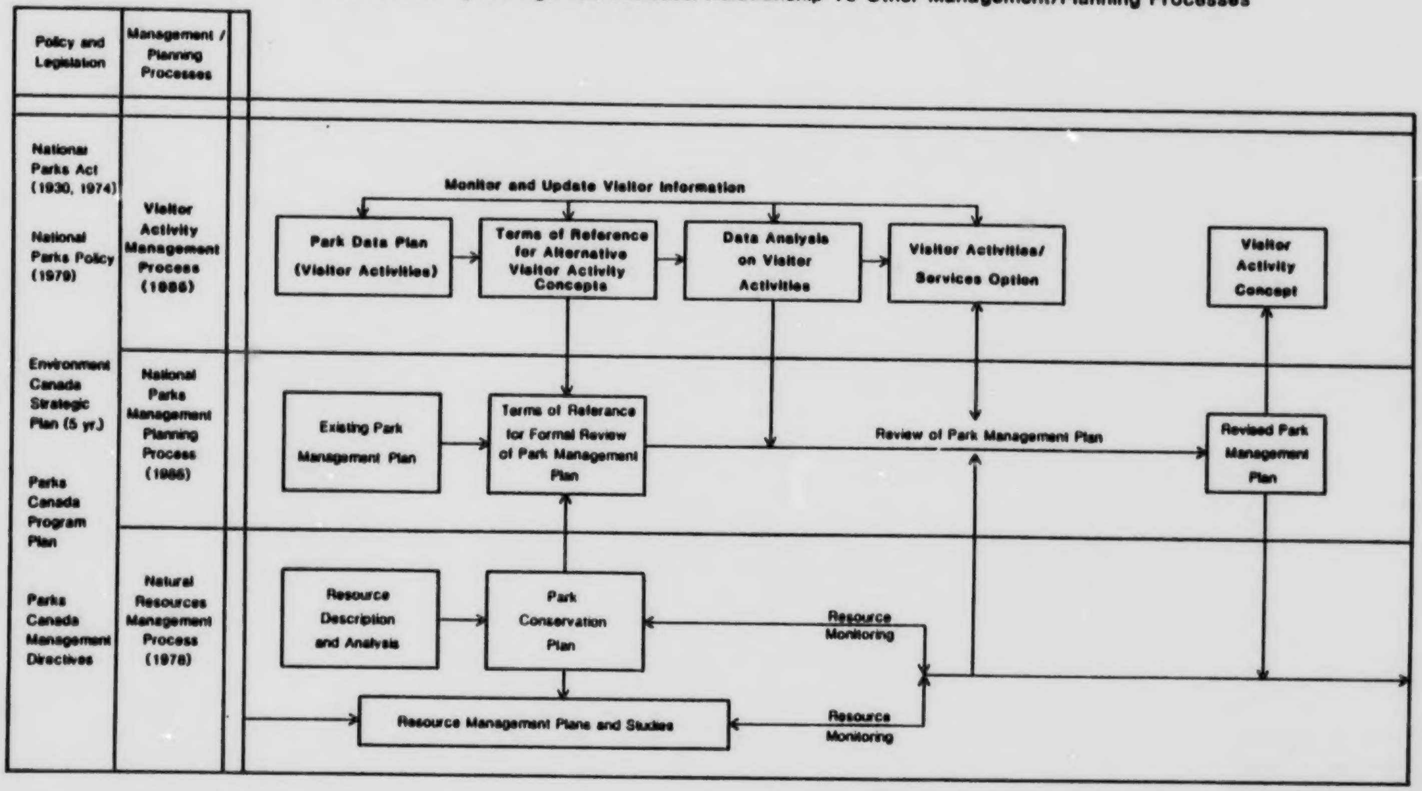
[3] Parks Canada, 1983. Socio-Economic Analysis in Management Plans for National Parks. Management Directive 2.2.1. April. The completion of a socio-economic analysis is an integral part of the development of a New National Park Proposal.

A.1 Refers to a section in the Visitor Activity Management Process Manual (1985). Parks Canada.

Figure 3

ESTABLISHED PARKS WITH A PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN DEVELOPED WITHOUT VISITOR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS INPUT

Visitor Activity Management Process: Relationship To Other Management/Planning Processes



Policy and Legislation
Management / Planning Processes
National Parks Act (1930, 1974)
National Parks Policy (1979)
Environment Canada Strategic Plan (5 yr.)
Parks Canada Program Plan
Parks Canada Management Directives
Visitor Activity Management Process (1986)
National Parks Management Planning Process (1986)
Natural Resources Management Process (1978)
Monitor and Update Visitor Information
Park Data Plan (Visitor Activities)
Terms of Reference for Alternative Visitor Activity Concepts
Data Analysis on Visitor Activities
Visitor Activities/ Services Option
Visitor Activity Concept
Existing Park Management Plan
Terms of Referance for Formal Review of Park Management Plan
Review of Park Management Plan
Revised Park Management Plan
Resource Description and Analysis
Park Conservation Plan
Resource Monitoring
Resource Management Plans and Studies
Resource Monitoring

CASE STUDIES

Two case studies are presented here to illustrate how VAMP enables Parks to better manage the tension between visitor use and resource protection. The cases draw on experience in two management contexts: a new national park proposal for Mingan (Figure 2) and an existing national park undergoing a review of its current management plan for Kejimkujik National Park (Figure 3).

New Park Proposal: The Mingan Archipelago

One of the fundamental strategic problems facing Parks is the acquisition of new areas to the parks system. In an era of fiscal restraint it is becoming increasingly difficult to acquire, plan and manage new additions. In some cases new park establishment has taken as long as 15 years. The Mingan area was identified as being of biological, oceanographic and historical importance to Parks in 1926, but ownership by Dome Petroleum inhibited government acquisition. Changing oil markets encouraged Dome to sell the 40 islands, located in a chain along the Gulf of St. Lawrence north shore, east of Sept Iles between Anticosti Island and the mainland, to the government in 1983.

Within 18 months of the date of purchase, interim management guidelines were approved for the new park. Many variables were related to the rapidity with which Parks progressed through its management planning process (Parks Canada 1984c); a major factor was the Visitor Activity Management Process. VAMP documents prepared by the Quebec region of Parks Canada clearly illustrate how this process facilitated the planning of the new park so quickly. Together, the VAMP-related reports also illustrate some of the organizational efficiencies that can be acquired through the use of a matrix style of management.

Direction to develop studies to identify social and economic impacts (SEIA; cf., Val This Volume) that could be attributed directly or indirectly to a park proposal was approved in 1983 before Parks acquired ownership of the Mingan archipelago. The Evaluation and Analysis Branch of the Socio-Economic Division (Ottawa) undertook a comprehensive analysis of the new park proposal and its possible development options (Parks Canada 1984d). Market segmentation, tourism infrastructure, economic impacts, community impacts and visitor forecasts for the study area were carefully developed in the report. Findings from the socioeconomic impact assessment presented at a press conference in Quebec City by the Minister of the Environment were well received by local residents.

SEIA data and additional research required by the VAMP framework took the analysis to another level of specificity. A series of important firsts for a new park proposal was achieved with the utilization of SEIA data and the VAMP approach. These included a marked reduction in the size and number of visitor services and facilities suggested in the preliminary report for the proposed park, removal of proposed park services from within park boundaries to mainland areas, increased local support from native persons and residents of coastal communities, and identification and signing of tourism and regional development institutional arrangements and co-operative strategies before the park reached a concept stage. The VAMP approach also contributed to longer planning horizons and perspectives than previous new park proposal documents had. Scenarios for interpretation, visitor services, public safety and an initial park data plan for visitor activities were developed as part of the VAMP documentation.

In this management context (New Park Proposal), VAMP gave rise to a new awareness of the need for social science research to complement natural science data. The Mingan case is both unique and encouraging as undoubtedly in the future Parks will have occasion again to respond quickly to opportunities to establish new national parks. This application of VAMP sets the stage for subsequent park management planning and detailed service planning.

Existing Park Management Plan Review: Kejimkujik National Park

Kejimkujik is located in central, southwestern Nova Scotia. Its 380 square kilometer area was designated as a national park in 1967 to protect and manage a natural area of Canadian significance representing important features of the eastern Canadian Atlantic Coast Uplands. The gentle rolling landscape with numerous lakes interconnected by rivers provides excellent canoeing and backcountry camping opportunities. In addition, semi-serviced camping, group tenting, picnicking, winter camping and cross-country skiing opportunities attract approximately 210,000 visitors per year.

The Park Management Plan for Kejimkujik was completed in 1978 (Parks Canada 1978b). A major drawback of the plan was the lack of direction provided to guide the management of visitor use. Until the pilot work for VAMP was initiated (1982-1986) managers and planners had little knowledge about such matters as visitor socio-demographics, recreation behavior, program and activity preferences of visitors, motivations and levels of satisfaction, user perceptions of issues related to crowding, impacts and conflicts or the extent of customary use of the park.

The pilot work on visitor activities was completed in two phases. Phase I concentrated on the development of the visitor activity profile concept (Tayler 1981). Activity profiles were developed from a summary and synthesis of existing theoretical and empirical literature and site-specific, informal knowledge. The profiles represent a compilation of data which describes the participant (socio-demographics, expectations, preferences, motives and market segments), the activity (setting requirements, safety, equipment requirements, definition), market trends (existing and potential for growth, societal trends, activity trends), infrastructure requirements (levels of service for facilities, information requirements and setting requirements for on-site support services), strategic direction (Parks' policy, Park Management Plan, management directives, budget), management by other agencies and the private sector (who services what markets now and in the future), appropriateness of the activity (the profiles are tied to the policy mandate and the biophysical resources of the park), research requirements (what additional information needs to be collected), and sources of information (annotated bibliography, list of contacts and related information).

Detailed profiles on 26 park activities were subsequently prepared, initially from secondary analysis (library sources and existing data bases, e.g., Tourism Canada Research) and long-term park staff's experiential knowledge. Mullen (1982) argues that much of the value of profiling lies in the Park staff's involvement in the process, leading to increased understanding of the activities themselves and the Park's publics. The activity profiles themselves do not enter the decision-making process. Rather, each park and its management planning team decide what is appropriate for that park based on its resource capability, current use and the park's role in the regional recreation and tourism industry. This enables each park to match levels of service with its target markets and to downscale, retrofit or develop the appropriate levels of information and service to match specific user groups or target market requirements.

Phase II of the pilot work involved confirming what the final product of the project (a summer session Visitor Services Plan) would include, defining the process required to develop the strategy and identifying the research needed to complete the plan.

The major achievement of this pilot project was the definition of an activity-package concept for the national park. An activity package includes the identification of selected park specific visitor services (mix of opportunities, activities, services and facilities) designed to provide a certain segment of the park visitor population with a satisfactory experience.

This approach required segmentation of the total potential visitor population and definition of the major characteristics of significant target markets (Robertson and Wright 1983, Market Facts 1984). An activity package was then suggested for each segment that the park might serve subject to National Parks Policy, the Park Management Plan and other management directives.

The application of VAMP in this management context has provided Park staff with a more comprehensive understanding of the range of existing visitor activities and priorities for future management action. Additional requirements relating to visitor services for specific target markets were also summarized and options to address them were suggested. Finally, additional social and natural science information needs to guide future research were identified. The park undertook a regional visitor demand analysis in the summer of 1986 to assess its potential market and to address issues related to identified markets.

DISCUSSION

Canadian national park planning and management has been substantially improved by the recognition through VAMP that social science, the techniques of marketing for non-profit agencies, and management information systems aid in understanding, communicating and serving the public. As a management process, VAMP assists in streamlining data collection, identifying revenue potential, specifying opportunities for volunteer involvement, reappraising scale of development, communicating more effectively with publics, and improving visitor satisfaction. However, some reflections seem appropriate.

VAMP remains a new management framework with only limited application in Canadian national parks. A series of organizational and technical barriers may impede the implementation of VAMP in national park planning.

The framework is bureaucratic in nature, a fact which might result in VAMP becoming an end in itself, merely used to justify the design and development of services, programs, infrastructure and facilities. While such justification is an important consideration on economic grounds, VAMP must also be integrated effectively with the other management process, the Natural Resources Management Process (Parks Canada 1978a) and with the existing National Parks Management Planning Process (Parks Canada 1986a and b). Neither VAMP nor the Natural Resources Management Processes are planning frameworks. They are management processes which identify and acquire social and natural science data required by the National Parks Management Planning Process. In effect, the two management processes support a planning framework for national parks. The tradition that the life sciences, archaeology, history, and earth science dictate park and protected area planning is a historic bias within Environment Canada, Parks which must be overcome if the VAMP framework is not to create additional problems for park planning and management.

At present, VAMP remains a framework, a skeleton in need of further development to establish a technical capability. The absence of a technical capability has created uncertainty and problems for planners and managers in the national parks, especially in those parks such as Kejimkujik which have been established for some time and are undergoing management plan reviews. The development of a technical capability is clearly required, but currently poses considerable organizational problems for Parks.

Surprisingly, VAMP is seen by senior Canadian national park management as going farther than the ROS framework. In using marketing concepts and techniques, especially in the development of service plans (interpretation, visitor services and public safety), VAMP offers progress in areas where difficulties have been encountered when ROS has been applied. However, differences in the two frameworks (ROS and VAMP) are rather more subtle than this obvious difference. There is a need to review and examine their similar roots in theoretical and empirical literature, and the connections between them.

Implementing VAMP will present Parks with technical and organizational problems with respect to the current preservation and use zoning system. No capability exists, at present, in the Park Management Planning Process to reconcile VAMP input with park zones. Activities identified by VAMP may lead to environmental impacts not identified by either the Natural Resources Management Process or the planning process. Impacts which threaten the heritage values of the park will require a review consistent with the current Canadian Environmental Assessment and Review Process.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, VAMP offers the potential to integrate social science and natural science data in national park planning and management. That potential is illustrated in this paper by case studies which indicate how, in the case of Mingan, a proposal for a new park was enhanced by the data developed by the VAMP framework. In the case of Kejimkujik, an existing park, VAMP's role has been to more precisely identify visitors' motivations and recreation behavior, necessary changes in levels of service for the park's publics, and future research needs of the park. VAMP helped remedy a major data gap in the existing park management plan.

As favorable as these results are as testimony to VAMP's potential, it must be pointed out that a number of serious problems have yet to be overcome. The requirement to reconcile VAMP input with the existing zoning system, the need to develop a technical capability for the framework and the danger of further entrenchment of VAMP as a bureaucratic process unto itself are major obstacles to an effective integration of social and natural science data in Parks' management planning process for Canadian national parks.

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NOTES

1. During the summer of 1986, Parks Canada officially changed its name to Environment Canada, Parks.

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READINGS ON THE VISITOR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS (VAMP)

3. Graham, R., P. Nilsen, R.J. Payne. 1988

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Visitor management in Canadian national parks

R. Graham, P. Nilsen and R.J. Payne

This article describes Environment Canada, Parks' Visitor Activity Management Process (VAMP) which attempts to integrate data about users, their characteristics and satisfactions with data about the natural environment of the park. VAMP provides a focal point for issues related to the appropriate mix of opportunities, activities, services and facilities, in a park or protected area. Parks' management process uses a marketing orientation to integrate visitor activity demands with resource opportunities and identify appropriate recreation opportunities in Canadian national parks. Social science data and a marketing orientation to visitor activity management provides a new strategy for park planning.

Keywords: Canada; national parks; visitor management

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The current legislated mandate of Environment Canada, Parks,[1] the federal agency responsible for the planning and management of Canadian national parks, is to protect for all time those places which are significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and also to promote public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of heritage in ways which leave it unimpaired for future generations.[2] The mandate is implemented through a network of national parks, historic parks, heritage canals, cooperative heritage areas and heritage rivers. There are currently 34 terrestrial national parks consisting of about 140 000 km^2 (1.3% of the Canadian land mass). A policy for the implementation of national marine parks in 29 marine areas in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Great Lakes environments, was signed by the Minister of the Environment in autumn 1986.[3] At present, only 20 of Canada's 39 terrestrial natural regions are represented in the national parks system and there are two new national marine parks.

In 1984/85, actual Parks expenditure was $308 million with revenues of $22 million. The agency had 5095 non-capital person–years and current estimates for fiscal 1986/87 call for expenditure of $303 million, a reduction in person–years of 193 or 4% and an increase in revenue to $31 million.[4]

There is strong support for the continuation of the national park programme among Canadians. Ultimately, however, the resources dedicated to the programme depend on political judgment. A recent analysis recognizes the importance of Parks' programmes but suggests changes in the quantity and quality of service to the public.[5]

Inadequate visitor management

The requirement of Environment Canada, Parks' mandate to protect heritage resources *and* to facilitate visitor use of those resources has not been met in park management plans or operations. Care of the physical, biological, and cultural heritage resources led Parks Canada to develop objective data about natural resources within park boundaries but minimal data about the dimensions and nature of human use. Park planning reflected a protection bias with the result that issues related to the mix of opportunities, activities, services and facilities were not well analysed or taken seriously. In practical terms, management action in national parks suffered. Facilities were badly located and sometimes too large or too small. Visitor activities evolved and Parks Canada reacted

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without managing the explosive growth in recreation, leisure and tourism.[6]

A functional approach to management planning within Parks relegated questions about regional integration, visitor use, service plans and design and development to the end of the planning process. Specialist units within the agency each had their own methods of dealing with visitor issues. Internal management reviews, noting this, began demanding confirmation and demonstration of projected benefits related to expansion and development within national parks.

Managing the tension between the resource and the visitor requires that park visitors and their activities be treated seriously. This requirement has led to the development of the Visitor Activity Management Process (VAMP). The advent of VAMP represents a fundamental change in orientation in Parks from a product or supply basis to an outward-looking market-sensitive one.

Traditionally, park agencies have utilized a product orientation to visitor activity planning and management. Park planners and managers, believed 'their primary task to be providing facilities, services and programs which they consider to be most appropriate, as efficiently as they are able'.[7] This approach involves deciding what the public wants and how the park agency can best provide for visitor and local wants. The resulting facilities, services and programmes are offered to the public with the hope that they will be utilized. Ensuing management then becomes operation-orientated, focusing on the facility or resource being offered rather than on the recreation experiences or benefits provided.

The public's lack of familiarity with parks, combined with increased government pressure to reduce financial and personnel resources, have encouraged park agencies to promote the products they have created. The selling perspective places greater emphasis on the product being offered. It also forces every internal function to compete and to justify its status and budget within the agency in terms of the volume of service provided or numbers through the door. Greater utilization of programmes and services is encouraged in order to ensure that they be retained or expanded.

Such efforts have ignored current research activities which emphasize that:

- marketing is an activity directed at satisfying needs and wants through exchange processes;[8]
- the park visitor experience is individual and multidimensional, the result of activities carried out in specific settings to achieve expected/desired outcomes;[9]
- both marketing and recreation seek to understand and manage social phenomena; and
- within marketing, management controls product, price, place and promotion. Success of any marketing strategy requires manipulation of these four variables in a manner which best serves both the agency's finite resources and the target consumer's needs.

Moreover, the product orientation may well inhibit the development of a constituency in support of parks and protected areas. Increasing evidence suggests that there is a 'substantial difference between managerial and user perceptions about ideal location, designs, facilities, supervision and maintenance'.[10]

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[1] In mid-summer 1986, the government of Canada changed the name of Parks Canada to Environment Canada, Parks.

[2] Parks Canada, *Parks Canada Policy*, Ottawa, 1979.

[3] Environment Canada, Parks, *National Marine Park Policy*, Ottawa, 1986.

[4] Neilsen Task Force, *Environment: Improved Program Delivery*, Ottawa, 1986.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Parks Canada, *Roles and Responsibilities (1979–1982)*, Internal Report, Ottawa, 1982; Parks Canada, *A Based Review*, Internal Report, Ottawa, 1984; Parks Canada, *Internal Organizational Management Study (1982–1985)*, Internal Report, Ottawa, 1985; Parks Canada, *Management Information Framework (1979–1985)*, Draft Internal Report, Ottawa, 1985; R.J. Payne and R. Graham, 'Towards an integrated approach to inventory, planning and management of parks and protected areas', *Park News*, Vol 20, No 4, 1984, pp 20–32; and R.J. Payne, R. Graham and P. Nilsen, *Preliminary Assessment of the Visitor Activity Management Process (VAMP)*, Technical Report prepared for Parks Canada Interpretation and Visitor Services, National Parks Branch, Ottawa, Ontario, 1986.

[7] D.R. Howard and J.L. Crompton, 'The nature of marketing in recreation and parks', in W.C. Brown, *Financing, Managing and Marketing Recreation and Park Resources*, Dubuque, Iowa, 1980.

[8] Philip Kotler, *Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning and Control*, 3rd ed, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, USA, 1976.

[9] USDA, U.S. Forest Service, *ROS User's Guide*, USDA, Washington, DC, 1981.

[10] Wilbur La Page, 'Recreation resource management for visitor satisfaction', *Journal of Parks and Recreation Administration*, Vol 1, No 2, 1983, pp 79–89.

In the following sections a critique is offered of several recreation planning frameworks that attempt to reconcile protection and use. The evolution, structure and relation of VAMP to other national park planning and management processes is documented. Three case studies in which VAMP was utilized are presented to illustrate how VAMP employs social science methods and techniques to contribute to national park establishment and planning. Finally, several reflections are offered on the future of VAMP and the further developments necessary to ensure that Environment Canada, Parks successfully integrates protection and use.

New generation of recreation planning frameworks

Attempts to integrate data about users, their characteristics and satisfactions with data about the natural environment of parks in a technical planning framework have a rather short history in North America. The three which best represent this new generation are the user resource planning method; social ecology; and the recreation opportunity spectrum.

User resource planning method

This method represents an early attempt to reconcile visitor and natural resource issues in a systematic manner. It was developed by the (US) National Advisory Council on Regional Recreation Planning (1959) to direct the preparation of an outdoor recreation plan for the State of California. Thabit describes the four constituent parts:

> . . . users are first surveyed to find out what they want and need; second, the resources are measured and typed; next, a plan for recreation is prepared which integrates the need and the resource data; and fourth, the estimated costs are balanced against the expected benefits.[11]

Although the method has not been applied in its entirety and, therefore, results generated are difficult to evaluate, it is important and interesting because it represents a description of the planning problem in supply/demand and cost/benefit terms[12] affording it an appropriate degree of analytical capability. The demand for activities and experiences can be estimated through user surveys, resource potential and capability through a 'random-point method' which identifies grid points on which resource inventories may be focused.[13] It is through the integration of user data with the mapped resource potential and capability that a plan is developed.

However, the method has not been implemented widely. It was not needed by most park agencies in the 1960s because traditional types of demand (eg camping) were greater than supply. Moreover, the task of surveying users and potential users – information required by this method – appeared an unnecessary, difficult and expensive undertaking. The supply determination component, although hard to obtain, seems inadequate when compared to the inventory technologies and ecological classification systems used at present. Achieving integration of supply and demand components is at best a vague proposition without direction from organizational mandate and policy.

In summary, the utility of the user resource planning method is limited by three serious flaws – it requires data about users which are expensive to obtain; it lacks the capability tc assess the critical issue of ecological carrying capacity; its integration of supply and demand components is achieved primarily in economic, rather than ecological and social, terms.

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[11] W. Thabit, 'Review of a user-resource recreation planning method', *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, Vol 27, No 3, pp 229–233.

[12] S.M. Gold, *Recreation Planning and Design*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1980.

[13] Thabit, *op cit*, Ref 11, p 230.

Social ecology

The social ecology model for park and recreation planning has been best enunciated by Nelson.[14] The model encompasses four components:

- ecology;
- strategies and institutional arrangements;
- perceptions, attitudes and values; and
- technology.

The focus is on landscape as a result of interaction between man and the natural environment.[15] The model operates as a conceptual framework which views natural systems (ecology) as connected with organizational policies and legislation (strategies and institutional arrangements), with the perceptions, attitudes and values of various groups and with technologies (ways of doing things) that have had an impact on the landscape. Subsequent work by Nelson and his associates has produced an abiotic, biotic and cultural (ABC) survey methodology which operationalizes the social ecology model.[16]

The development of the ABC method represents a movement away from the full integration of the 'perception, attitudes and values' component of the social ecology model. This component has been submerged in the broader 'cultural' category as an expression of human landscape assessment and action in the past. Consequently, the operational formulation of the social ecology model gives primary importance to supply, especially in ecological terms, to management direction and to environmental modifications wrought by human groups. In so doing, the ABC method offers good service as a comprehensive inventory system but limited potential as an integrative mechanism within which user concerns and resource capability can be addressed.

The social ecology model is primarily ecological when implemented by the ABC method. As such, it minimizes the importance of economic factors and user needs/concerns to address supply and resource capability in a comprehensive manner.

Recreation opportunity spectrum

The recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) is a technical planning framework which combines some of the most promising elements of the preceding frameworks.[17] This framework offers considerable strength on the supply or resource side. When used in concert with a social ecological classification system (eg the ABC method) it becomes more dynamic and discriminating. The ROS, building upon research findings, utilizes an integral logic based on relative remoteness from artificial features and modifications, user density and evidence of management action, to identify a spectrum of setting opportunities ranging from pristine wilderness to high-density urban. When the ROS is applied to a national park or other large protected area, it is possible to develop a management plan that will protect sensitive areas and identify settings where visitors may achieve diverse experiences through recreational activities.[18] Thus, considerations about supply or setting opportunities reflect the integration of resource and visitor issues missing from other formulations. Moreover, a carrying capacity computation encourages the manager to set quantitative limits for users and activities in a given setting and, thus, provides the ROS with substantial management capability.

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[14] J.G. Nelson, 'Canadian National Parks and related reserves: research needs and management', in R. Krueger and B. Mitchell, eds, *Managing Canada's Renewable Resources*, Methuen, Toronto, 1977.

[15] *Ibid*, pp 173–174.

[16] J.G. Nelson, J.B. Theberge and P. Grigoriew, 'Park Boundary Delineation Manual: The ABC Resource Survey Approach', *Occasional Paper 4*, Heritage Resource Centre, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 1985.

[17] R.N. Clark and G.H. Stankey, *The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum: A Framework for Planning Management and Research*, General Technical Report, PNW-98, Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, Seattle, 1979.

[18] Parks Canada, *In Trust For Tomorrow: A Management Framework for Four Mountain Parks*, Western Region, Calgary, 1986.

Powerful as the ROS is in determining setting opportunities, user demand for these opportunities must be determined either through user surveys or through management plan review.[19] The genius of the ROS lies in utilizing specific user information rather than generating it.

Driver and Brown[20] provide an illustration of how the ROS can be employed to determine various benefits and impacts of management decisions in parks. This facility gives the ROS framework additional capabilities but also serves to emphasize the critical role of user information. One can develop a management plan by means of the ROS but one cannot document the range of social–psychological and economic benefits made available without the detailed information acquired only through expensive user surveys.

The ROS is a flexible conceptual framework which is much more sophisticated than the two discussed above. It offers great promise in integrating user and resource concerns to determine the supply of recreational opportunities in a technical fashion. There is strength, too, in the orientation towards quantifying benefits derived from participation in recreational activities. However, without the inclusion of user information generated elsewhere, the ROS offers primarily a sophisticated and effective appraisal of the supply of opportunities. To be effective in marketing and assessing benefits, the ROS is revealed to be dependent on data that are often expensive and time-consuming to collect.

Visitor activity management process

Evolution of the process

In the late 1960s and for some years afterwards, national parks systems underwent tremendous growth.[21] During this growth period there seemed to be little need or time to manage the tension between the resource and the user. Most of the human resources and budget allocations were directed to expansion of the national park system. NGOs, ENGOs (environmental non-governmental organizations) and academics had turned their attention to the need for a planning system which would reconcile the policy objectives of preservation and use with operational management in the parks. By the mid-1960s, Parks Canada began the development of 'provisional master plans' to describe existing and possible future situations in parks. Basically, these plans were dependent on natural resource information with little or no emphasis on understanding visitors. Moreover, during this era, federal, provincial and local tourist agencies promoted the natural splendour of national parks and the underlying theme that a park could be all things to all people.

During this time, some of Parks Canada's professional interpreters/naturalists openly expressed the feeling that the classic approach to educating the public was not presenting the agency's mandate, image and messages effectively. Beginning in 1970, and culminating in 1975, a federal–provincial task force on interpretation attempted to discover what was wrong with interpretation and visitor services in parks. The

[19] M.J. Manfredo, B.L. Driver and P.J. Brown, 'A test of concepts inherent in experience-based setting management for outdoor recreation areas', *Journal of Leisure Research*, Vol 15, No 3, 1983, pp 263–283.

[20] B. Driver and P.J. Brown, 'Contributions of behavioral scientists to recreation resource management', in I. Altman and J.F. Wohlwill, eds, *Behavior and the Natural Environment*, Plenum Press, New York, 1983.

[21] J. Harrison, K. Miller and J. McNeeley, 'World coverage of protected areas: development goals and environmental needs', *Ambio*, Vol 11, No 5, 1982, pp 238–246.

task force recommended a communications strategy based on marketing. Product definition was expressed in terms of resource values. Market segmentation was based on definition, behaviour and needs of potential users. Organization/agency resources were based on mandates management systems, staffing and finances. It was urged that:

> . . . we must identify market segments, so that we can design communication systems that will reach each visitor segment before, during and after they [sic] have enjoyed parks.[22]

At the same time, Parks Canada developed an Interpretation Planning Process. Unfortunately, the direction established by the 1975 federal–provincial task force was overlooked, and there was no attempt to link interpretation and visitor services directly to the agency's proposed Park Management Planning Process.[23]

Subtle organizational changes occurred as individuals within the agency began to realize that the policy mandate included *both* protecting heritage and providing opportunities for its understanding, appreciation and enjoyment. Some of these changes included the establishment of the Socio-Economic Research Division; the development of the Natural Resource Conservation Division, which began the analysis and management of the natural resources and the formulation of the Natural Resources Management Process,[24] the development of a rational basis for additions to the parks system, the three year (1975–78) effort to define a Park Management Planning Process clearly, and a 15-year effort to work out how best to respond to the mix of opportunities, activities, services and facilities required by visitors.[25]

In 1970 at the Federal Provincial Parks Conference, John Farina, a Canadian leisure scientist, declared that 'parks people were out of touch with the general population . . . while parks are for people, what people have priority?'.[26] He suggested that parks provided only one opportunity for the public's leisure activity and that park agencies were competing with other public and private organizations for discretionary time. Moreover, he felt that if a park agency's mandate was not clearly communicated, parks would lose their traditional public support. Farina described Parks Canada as 'inward-oriented', 'traditional' and 'with no vision of the future in respect to leisure and recreation'. Throughout the next nine years, internal functional reviews, programme reviews and task forces were asking 'what is Parks Canada's business and how is the agency's business reflected in its planning and management?' It gradually became clear that visitor services staff within the parks were operating and maintaining facilities, rather than managing visitor opportunities or encouraging public understanding. Interpretation and Visitor Services, in conjunction with the Socio-Economic Research Division, began a series of about 120 projects to formalize the visitor management aspect of the overall park management planning process. In an agency seemingly overloaded with management processes, another process was not greeted with open arms.

In 1979, Parks Canada selected a consultant to develop a senior management perspective on the issues related to visitor management.[27] In the same year, Parks Canada's senior management implemented a system to justify and substantiate the relationship between *ad hoc* projects and management planning.[28] Four draft versions of a management process for visitor activity based on Brooks's report and subsequent Program Management Committee approval were developed and tested to the point that nationwide staff training could begin in 1985. Four national training workshops and numerous regional and park-specific training efforts have so far been completed. An implementation strategy within current financial and human resources has been prepared.

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[22] Parks Canada, *A Proposal for Park Management Planning*, Ottawa, 1975, p 11.

[23] Federal-Provincial Parks Conference Proceedings, *Task Force Report on Interpretation*, Ottawa, 1975.

[24] Parks Canada, *Natural Resource Management Process*, Ottawa, 1978.

[25] Parks Canada, *National Parks System Planning Manual*, Systems Planning Branch, Ottawa, 1972.

[26] J. Farina, 'Parks and leisure behaviour', in *Proceedings: Federal Provincial Parks Conference*, Ottawa, 1970, pp 3–9.

[27] L. Brooks, *The Role of National Parks*, internal document, Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1980.

[28] Parks Canada, *Project Initiation Planning System*, Ottawa, 1979.

VAMP is not a process by itself. It is a way of responding to the policy mandate and to senior management's vision of the need for accountable, professional decisions about developing opportunities for heritage enjoyment. It also enables the manager to consider efficiency and effectiveness judiciously in terms of visitor opportunities and the selected markets they serve.[29]

VAMP's a priori *provisos*

Change in large organizations is a cumulative phenomenon. Once Parks Canada had decided to improve the national parks planning and management process by integrating a visitor management process, a series of provisos were established to guide its development and to protect the integrity of existing processes.

The VAMP project started from the proviso that the new process would not be driven by marketing concepts, but it was recognized that marketing held some of the tools and techniques to adapt to Parks Canada's management process.

The organization would continue to have one management planning process which is best described as a spine supported by two management processes – the existing Natural Resources Management Process and the new visitor management process. VAMP would rationally determine what was needed to support the agency's use portion of its mandate, what activities are appropriate in a park and how the public may understand, appreciate and enjoy the natural and cultural heritage in a park. VAMP cannot stand alone – it must be an integral part of the Park Management Planning Process.

VAMP would be problem-and-issue- rather than data-driven. The concern was to make good management decisions. The acquisition of useful decision-making data includes the rich pool of experiential and informal knowledge within an organization and within resident populations and customary users of a region. Such subjective and objective data, collected as part of an ongoing database development initiative, are utilized to solve park management related problems and issues.

VAMP also started from the proviso that social science and ecological data are not incompatible and, when combined, can enhance protection and use of national parks.

VAMP would place strong emphasis on the human element in park and protected area designation, planning and management. Access, boundary definition, economic and social impacts related to visitor and traditional use, infrastructure development, regional integration and projected life-cycle costs are an integral part of this process.[30] These necessary safeguards must be established before developing a national park and/or subsequent planning documents.

The model's end-product would be a series of structured decisions represented in a plan. These decisions are made only after all relevant aspects of the problem have been considered. VAMP thus provides the manager and planner with a flexible framework to integrate social science data with the Management Planning Process.[31] In summary form, these *a priori* provisos seem logical but until recently they were difficult to achieve.

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[29] Parks Canada, *Management Process for Visitor Activities*, Draft, Ottawa, 1985; Environment Canada, Parks, *Getting Started: A Guide to Service Planning*, Ottawa, 1987.

[30] Parks Canada, *Directive 2.2.1: Socio-Economic Analysis in Management Plans for National Parks*, April 1983.

[31] Parks Canada, *National Parks Management Planning Process Manual*, Ottawa, 1986.

The generic model

In all of its planning programmes, Parks Canada employs a traditional approach involving six steps:

- objective(s);
- terms of reference;
- database analysis;
- concept/options;
- recommendations; and
- approval and implementation.

This sequence is repeated for each planning cycle from new park proposal to operating park service plans. The generic representation for planning and management of visitor activities elaborates upon this sequence (see Figure 1).

In the generic model, management direction and data have been put on the same footing to dispel any notions that VAMP is data-driven. Data and information are certainly important but serve as an aid in management decision making.

This is where VAMP exhibits its capability to specify for managers the requirements for both supply and demand information. For information about visitors and use, it is logical to begin with what is known and what can be easily determined (eg the regional situation). To assess Parks Canada's attention to regional integration, the agency undertook a review of 27 management plans developed between 1967 and 1984. In general, this research identified worthwhile approaches, missed opportunities and widespread inconsistency among the selected management plans.[32] Although Parks Canada has neither the mandate nor the legislative authority to be a regional planning authority, there is a recognized need to be involved within a region if the mandate is to be achieved. National parks can no longer function as 'islands' in isolation from their surrounding areas – in fact they are subject to the identical problems, issues, and pressures as their proximal areas. Outside resource and development activities, tourism expectations for the national park, need for cooperation and coordination with customary users of the area, local and regional socioeconomic viability, and the need to communicate effectively and anticipate community response to specific policies, have led Parks Canada to place a new focus on the development of a regional integration strategy for each park, initially through a social and environmental impact assessment, followed by the VAMP process and the park's management plan.

The VAMP framework attempts to identify park visitors and their motivations in order to determine appropriate markets for the park and its immediate region. VAMP is also concerned with the socioeconomic advantages and disadvantages associated with the mix of opportunities, activities, services and facilities for both the park and the region. Last, the input from the VAMP approach integrates demand with supply (see left side of diagram in Figure 1) and with any overriding management objectives to protect seascapes and landscapes.

Experimental and informal knowledge can play an important part at this point in the process. After determining what is known about the

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[32] J. Birtch, *Review of Provisions for Regional Integration in Park Management Planning Documents*, Report prepared for Community and Municipal Affairs, National Parks Branch, Ottawa, 1985; and J. Birtch, *Regional Integration of National Parks*, Report prepared for Community and Municipal Affairs, National Parks Branch, Ottawa, 1985.

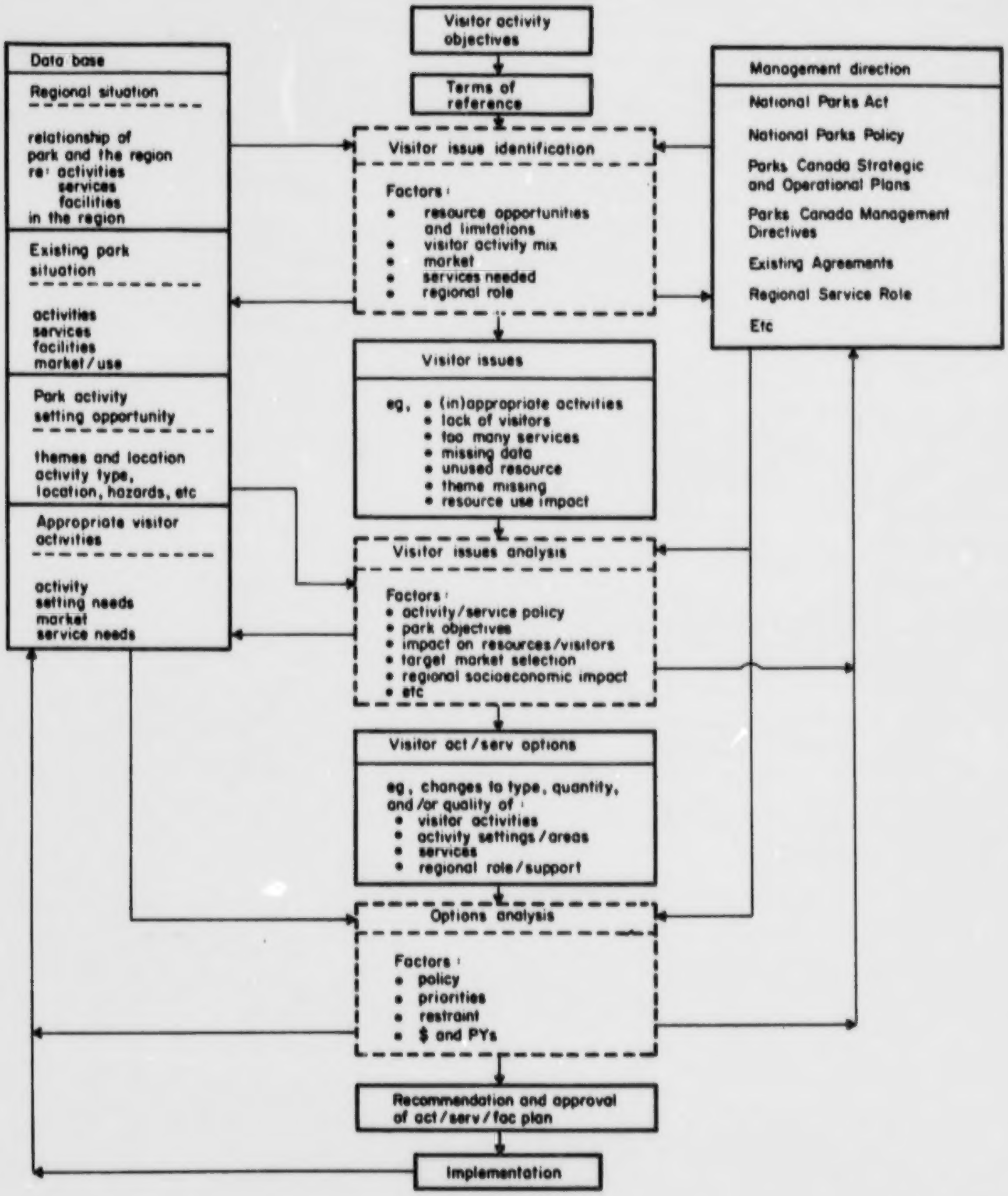
Visitor activity objectives
Terms of reference
Data base
Regional situation
relationship of park and the region re: activities services facilities in the region
Existing park situation
activities
services
facilities
market/use
Park activity setting opportunity
themes and location
activity type,
location, hazards, etc
Appropriate visitor activities
activity
setting needs
market
service needs
Visitor issue identification
Factors:
• resource opportunities and limitations
• visitor activity mix
• market
• services needed
• regional role
Management direction
National Parks Act
National Parks Policy
Parks Canada Strategic and Operational Plans
Parks Canada Management Directives
Existing Agreements
Regional Service Role
Etc
Visitor issues
eg, • (in)appropriate activities
• lack of visitors
• too many services
• missing data
• unused resource
• theme missing
• resource use impact
Visitor issues analysis
Factors:
• activity/service policy
• park objectives
• impact on resources/visitors
• target market selection
• regional socioeconomic impact
• etc
Visitor act/serv options
eg, changes to type, quantity, and/or quality of:
• visitor activities
• activity settings/areas
• services
• regional role/support
Options analysis
Factors:
• policy
• priorities
• restraint
• $ and PYs
Recommendation and approval of act/serv/fac plan
Implementation

Figure 1. Generic representation of VAMP.

regional situation and existing use of the (proposed) national park, information on potential visitor activity markets is compiled. The specification of visitor activity profiles is an integral part of the VAMP framework. An example, focusing on nordic skiing will serve to illustrate the various elements which together make up a visitor activity profile.

It is evident from Table 1 that nordic skiing in Canada is a multifaceted activity and that not all facets might be appropriate in national parks. For the requirements of competitive skiing and even sport and fitness skiing, the degrees of trail preparation and site modification represent changes to the natural landscape probably unacceptable under current national park policy. For day-use recreational skiing and backcountry skiing requirements are in keeping with existing national park policy and operations. These distinctions in terms of the setting, site, facility and service requirements afford national park managers the opportunity to determine the degree of impact related to each type of nordic skiing.

Table 1. Visitor activity profile – Nordic Skiing.

Activity	**Recreation day-use**	**Recreation sport/fitness**	**Competitive**	**Backcountry skiing**
Participants				
Age	25–50+	19–35	under 19 and 25–35	19–25
Gender	male/female	male/female	male	male
Occupation	professional/ managerial	professional/ managerial	technical/sales	technical/junior professional
Income	upper	upper	lower	lower
Frequency	9 times per year	10–20 times per year	< 20 times per year	> 17 times per year
Skill level	beginner/ intermediate	intermediate	intermediate/ advanced	advanced
Market trends				
Market participation	80%	17%	2%	1%
Market trends	growing	growing	steady	steady
Setting-related requirements				
Setting	Urban park Provincial/ National Park other public lands	urban ski centres	training centre	backcountry areas in Provincial/ National Park
Sites	easy access short use marked, groomed trails	long distances and physically challenging terrain	distance challenge exclusive use for racing	off-track powder alpine slopes
Facilities	concession staging area shelter lighted trail	concession staging area lighted trail shelter	trails to national standards and spectator areas	staging area and lift access
Services	instruction day care guides	instruction day care guides	Media access	guides
Other agencies involved	municipal government conservation authorities clubs resorts provincial parks	clubs resorts	amateur skiing associations clubs training centres	outfitters resorts Provincial parks
Appropriateness	yes	doubtful	doubtful	yes
Research requirements	← Monitoring of market changes →			

Source:
Parks Canada, *Visitor Activity Profile on Cross-Country (Nordic) Skiing*, Ottawa, 1986.

Research needs also constitute an important component, especially in activities such as nordic skiing which continues to develop and change. The identification of research needs recognizes that change should be monitored and serves to put Environment Canada, Parks in a position to respond quickly to service and site modification demands where appropriate.

Natural resource information is collected through the Natural Resources Management Process and is assessed to identify resource opportunities and constraints. The inclusion of such information in VAMP is important because it helps achieve an integration between visitor use and resource protection.

This information forms the basis for the data analysis in the generic model. The application of the generic model yields two outputs – visitor use issues and visitor use options. The options are developed in response to the identified issues.

Management contexts for implementing VAMP

VAMP is currently being implemented in both new national park proposals and existing national parks (Service Plan Development). In practice, there are actually four management contexts within which VAMP will be implemented (see Figures 2–5). Major differences in these contexts exist in the types of outputs, their content and level of detail. For instance, the only output from VAMP in the first context (Figure 2), New Park Proposal, is a preliminary evaluation of visitor activities (A1). This output provides an initial understanding of the proposed park's visitor opportunities, associated market segments, local and regional socioeconomic issues, and suggests preliminary development scenarios to be reviewed in a social and environmental impact assessment. By comparison, in the third context (Figure 5) outputs are park plans which include interpretation, visitor services and public safety (D1, D2, D3). These specific service plans build on the approved visitor activity concept by selecting target markets, specifying the public and private mix of recreation opportunities, activities, services and facilities and guide the design and development of programmes, services and facilities.

Figures 2 to 5 illustrate how VAMP is integrated with natural resource information by means of the National Park Management Planning Process.[33] The implementation strategy for VAMP is currently

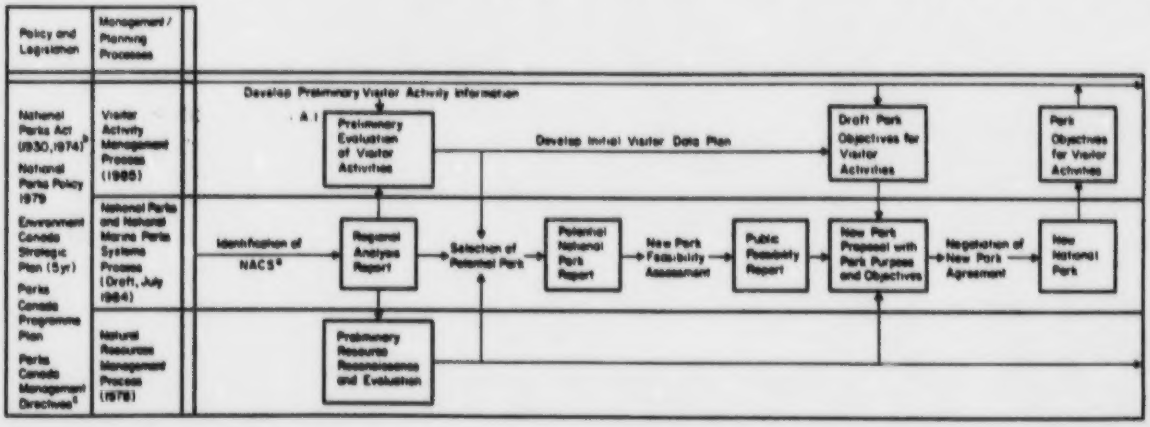
Policy and Legislation
Management / Planning Processes
National Parks Act (1930,1974)[b]
National Parks Policy 1979
Environment Canada Strategic Plan (5yr)
Parks Canada Programme Plan
Parks Canada Management Directives[c]
Visitor Activity Management Process (1985)
National Parks and National Marine Parks Systems Process (Draft, July 1984)
Natural Resources Management Process (1978)
Develop Preliminary Visitor Activity information
A.1
Preliminary Evaluation of Visitor Activities
Develop Initial Visitor Data Plan
Draft Park Objectives for Visitor Activities
Park Objectives for Visitor Activities
Identification of NACS[a]
Regional Analysis Report
Selection of Potential Park
Potential National Park Report
New Park Feasibility Assessment
Public Feasibility Report
New Park Proposal with Park Purpose and Objectives
Negotiation of New Park Agreement
New National Park
Preliminary Resource Reconnaissance and Evaluation

Figure 2. New park proposal.

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[33] Parks Canada, *op cit*, Ref 30.

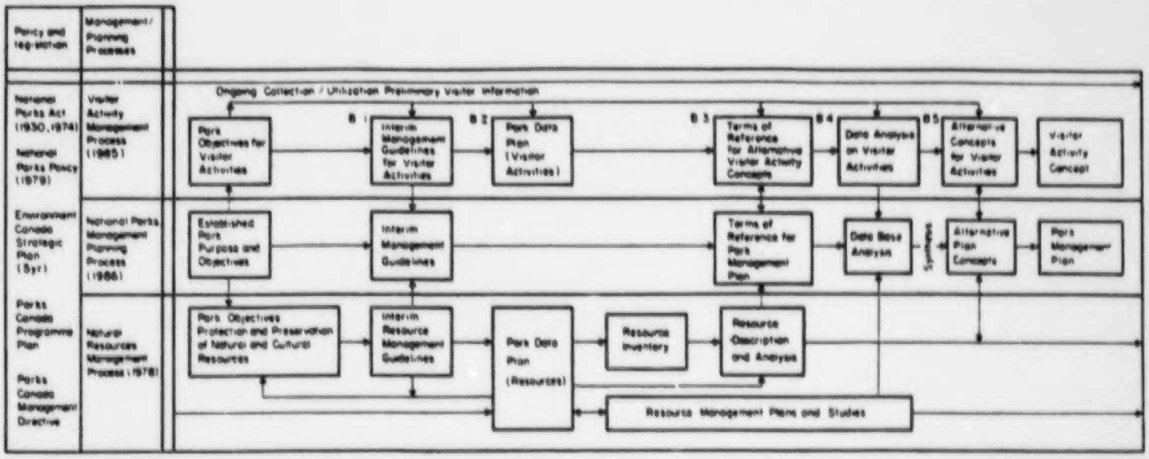
Policy and legislation
Management/ Planning Processes
National Parks Act (1930, 1974)
National Parks Policy (1979)
Environment Canada Strategic Plan (5yr)
Parks Canada Programme Plan
Parks Canada Management Directive
Visitor Activity Management Process (1985)
National Parks Management Planning Process (1986)
Natural Resources Management Process (1978)
Ongoing Collection / Utilization Preliminary Visitor Information
Park Objectives for Visitor Activities
B 1
Interim Management Guidelines for Visitor Activities
B 2
Park Data Plan (Visitor Activities)
B 3
Terms of Reference for Alternative Visitor Activity Concepts
B 4
Data Analysis on Visitor Activities
B 5
Alternative Concepts for Visitor Activities
Visitor Activity Concept
Established Park Purpose and Objectives
Interim Management Guidelines
Terms of Reference for Park Management Plan
Data Base Analysis
Synthesis
Alternative Plan Concepts
Park Management Plan
Park Objectives Protection and Preservation of Natural and Cultural Resources
Interim Resource Management Guidelines
Park Data Plan (Resources)
Resource Inventory
Resource Description and Analysis
Resource Management Plans and Studies

Figure 3. Established parks without a park management plan.

focused on development of service plans in existing parks (interpretation, visitor services, and public safety) and on new park proposals.

An important component in each of the contexts is the Park Data Plan (Visitor Activities). This data plan is a recently developed concept within VAMP and presents a specific programme for the collection and updating of required relevant visitor activity data. In the past, visitor use data were marked by confusion and inconsistent data collection procedures with no linkages to management planning.

Case studies

Three case studies are presented here to illustrate how VAMP enables

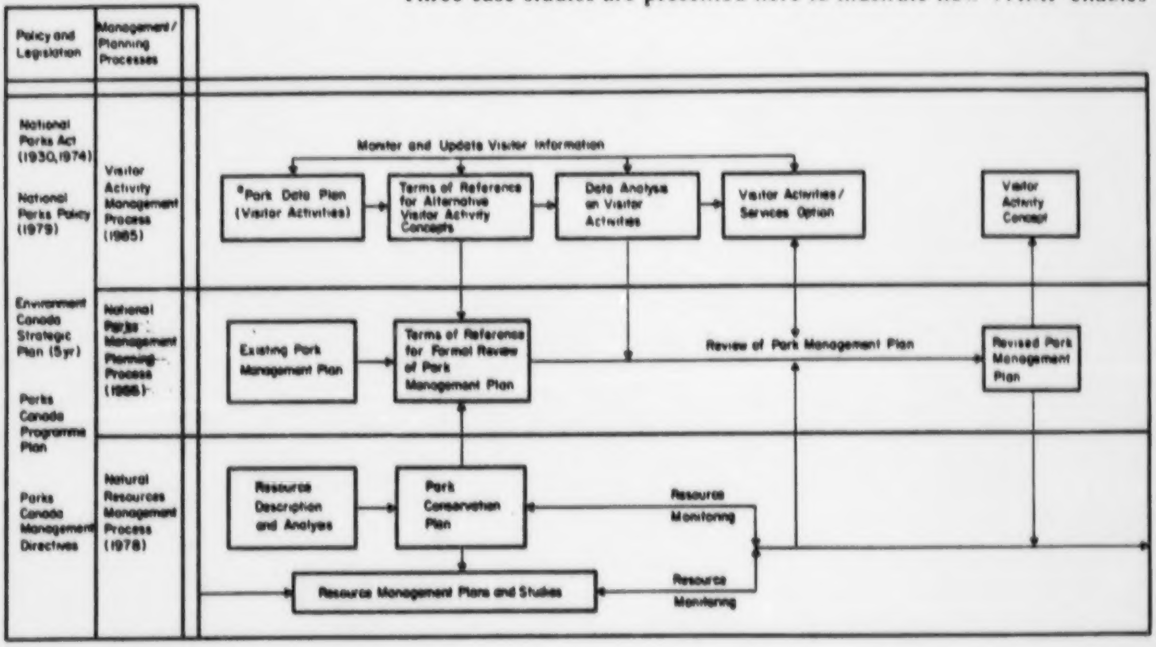
Policy and Legislation
Management/ Planning Processes
National Parks Act (1930, 1974)
National Parks Policy (1979)
Environment Canada Strategic Plan (5yr)
Parks Canada Programme Plan
Parks Canada Management Directives
Visitor Activity Management Process (1985)
National Parks Management Planning Process (1986)
Natural Resources Management Process (1978)
Monitor and Update Visitor Information
*Park Data Plan (Visitor Activities)
Terms of Reference for Alternative Visitor Activity Concepts
Data Analysis on Visitor Activities
Visitor Activities / Services Option
Visitor Activity Concept
Existing Park Management Plan
Terms of Reference for Formal Review of Park Management Plan
Review of Park Management Plan
Revised Park Management Plan
Resource Description and Analyses
Park Conservation Plan
Resource Monitoring
Resource Management Plans and Studies
Resource Monitoring

Figure 4. Established parks with a park management plan developed without VAMP input.

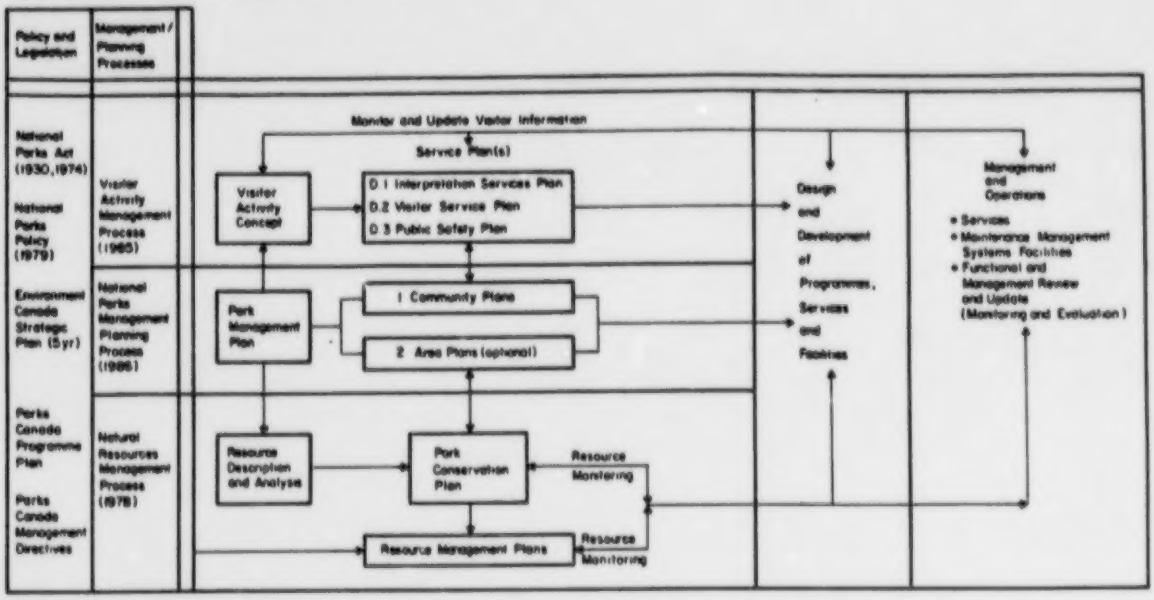
Policy and Legislation
Management / Planning Processes
National Parks Act (1930, 1974)
National Parks Policy (1979)
Environment Canada Strategic Plan (5yr)
Parks Canada Programme Plan
Parks Canada Management Directives
Visitor Activity Management Process (1985)
National Parks Management Planning Process (1986)
Natural Resources Management Process (1978)
Monitor and Update Visitor Information
Service Plan(s)
Visitor Activity Concept
D.1 Interpretation Services Plan
D.2 Visitor Service Plan
D.3 Public Safety Plan
Park Management Plan
1 Community Plans
2 Area Plans (optional)
Resource Description and Analysis
Park Conservation Plan
Resource Monitoring
Resource Management Plans
Resource Monitoring
Design and Development of Programmes, Services and Facilities
Management and Operations
• Services
• Maintenance Management Systems Facilities
• Functional and Management Review and Update (Monitoring and Evaluation)

Figure 5. Established parks with a park management plan developed with VAMP input.

Parks to manage the tension between visitor use and resource protection. The cases draw on experience in two management contexts: new park proposal (Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve, Figure 2), and established parks with a park management plan developed without VAMP input (Point Pelee and Kejimkujik National Parks, Figure 5).

New park proposal – the Mingan Archipelago

Although Parks Canada's interest in this unique group of islands in the St Lawrence River can be traced to 1926, it was not until 1974 that the organization officially reactivated its involvement in the area (see Figure 6). Temperate maritime climate, unique geographic features, limestone bedrock, six different types of vegetation (forest, peat bog, moorland, cliffs, freshwater, and saltwater) and a unique historical and cultural context combine to make it one of the best potential representatives of both terrestrial and marine regions in the eastern St Lawrence region. The 78-km^2 area consists of 40 islands located in a chain along the Gulf of St Lawrence north shore, east of Sept Iles between Anticosti Island and the mainland.

One of the fundamental strategic problems facing Parks Canada is the acquisition of new parks to the parks system. In an era of fiscal restraint it is becoming increasingly difficult to acquire, plan and manage new additions to the system. In some cases establishing a new park has taken as long as 15 years. The Mingan area has long been identified as being of biological, oceanographic and historical importance but ownership by Dome Petroleum restricted government interest. Changing oil markets placed Dome Petroleum in a position which enabled it to make the 40 islands available to the Canadian government in 1983.

Within 18 months of the date of purchase, there were approved park purpose and objective statements and interim management guidelines

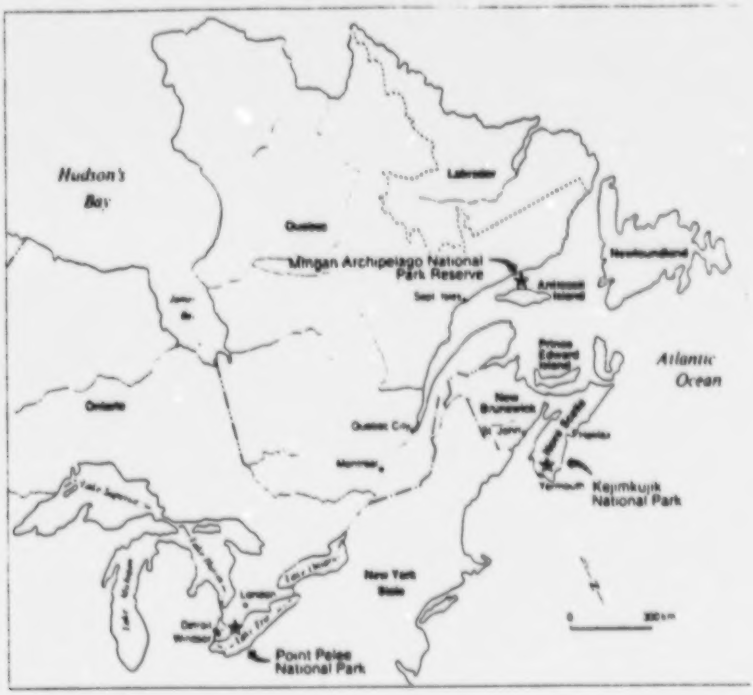
Hudson's Bay
Labrador
Quebec
Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve
Newfoundland
Anticosti Island
Sept Iles
James Bay
Prince Edward Island
Atlantic Ocean
Ontario
New Brunswick
Quebec City
St John
Nova Scotia
Montreal
Yarmouth
Kejimkujik National Park
Lake Superior
Lake Huron
Lake Michigan
Lake Ontario
New York State
London
Detroit
Windsor
Lake Erie
Point Pelee National Park
0
200 km

Figure 6. Location of case studies.

for the park reserve.[34] There are many variables related to the rapidity with which Parks Canada progressed through its Systems Process and initiated its Management Planning Process.[35] One of the major factors was VAMP. The VAMP documents prepared by the Quebec region of Parks Canada illustrate how this process enabled the development of a new park in such a short time.[36] Together, the VAMP related reports also illustrate how organizational efficiency can be increased through the use of a matrix style of management.

Direction to develop studies to identify social and economic impacts (SEIA) which could be attributed directly or indirectly to a park proposal or planning activities was approved before Parks acquired ownership of the Mingan archipelago in 1983. Evaluation and Analysis Branch of the Socio-Economic Division (Ottawa) undertook a comprehensive SEIA of the new proposal and its possible development options.[37] Market segmentation, tourism infrastructure, economic and community impacts and visitor forecasts for the study area were carefully developed in the report. Findings presented at a press conference in Quebec City by the Minister of the Environment were well received by local residents.

SEIA data and additional research required by the VAMP approach made the analysis even more specific. A series of unique firsts were achieved with these data and the VAMP approach. They included a marked reduction in the size and number of visitor services and facilities, removal of proposed park services from within park boundaries to mainland areas, increased support from residents of coastal communities and native Indians, and signing of tourism and regional development institutional arrangements and cooperative strategies *before* the park reached a concept stage. The VAMP approach also encouraged longer-term planning than previous new park proposal documents. Scenarios for interpretation, visitor services, public safety and an initial plan for visitor activities were developed as part of the VAMP documentation.

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[34] Parks Canada, *Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve: Park Purpose and Objective Statements*, Ottawa, June 1985.
[35] Parks Canada, *National Parks and National Marine Parks Systems Process*, Draft, Ottawa, 1984; and Parks Canada, *op cit*, Ref 29.
[36] Parks Canada, *Mingan: Park Feasibility Studies*, Quebec Region, Quebec, 1984.
[37] Parks Canada, *Impact Socio-Economique Local et Regional de la Creation d'un Parc national en Minganie*, Ottawa, 1984.

In this management context (New Park Proposal), VAMP gave rise to an awareness of the need for social science research to complement natural science data. The Mingan case is quite unique and encouraging, as the agency will undoubtedly have occasion again to respond quickly to opportunities to establish new national parks. This application of VAMP sets the stage for subsequent park management planning and detailed service planning.

Interpretation planning – Point Pelee National Park

Point Pelee National Park, comprising a 14-km long peninsula jutting out into Lake Erie (see Figure 6), became a National Park in 1918. Its proximity to population centres like Detroit and London Ontario and its appeal to diverse user groups, from swimmers to naturalists, have maintained visitation numbers in excess of 500 000 per annum for the past 20 years. The national park protects a remnant of 'Carolinian Canada', a zone of deciduous forest on the north shore of Lake Erie, found nowhere else in the country.

Although Point Pelee National Park operates under an approved management plan, that plan was formulated without contributions from VAMP.[38] Since 1982, interpretation planning has proceeded largely on the basis of an earlier, but unapproved, interpretation plan.[39] The continuing work in interpretation planning at Point Pelee has gradually incorporated a marketing orientation and helped to develop VAMP into a more understandable and practical vehicle for transforming management concerns about visitors into themes, programmes and facilities.

The application of VAMP to interpretation planning in Point Pelee National Park can be divided into three distinct phases:

- visitor analysis and analysis of existing services;
- theme analysis; and
- planning.

The 1982 management plan affords a partial view of the range of visitors to the park. After 1982, park staff re-examined this information to identify market segments and develop profiles of major visitor activities. These profiles included the traditional sociodemographic, origin-and-purpose-of-visit data but were supplemented with indications of services and information required to support the activity and management concerns about it (eg regulations). Data for the initial development of profiles came from the 1982 plan and from long-term park staff's experiential knowledge of visitors and park operations.

The re-examination of the available information provided two results – visitor activity profiles, and the identification of gaps in knowledge about visitors and deficiencies in support services. Themes to be interpreted in the national park have been well established in the draft interpretation plan and the current management plan.[40] These themes focus on the general role of Parks Canada and national parks in protecting representative landscapes as well as park-specific themes – Carolinian Canada, coastal zone processes on Lake Erie, related Great Lakes themes, bird migrations, the Marsh and landscape change during European settlement.

This phase identified the sites within the park where the themes could

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[38] Parks Canada, *Management Plan: Point Pelee National Park*, Ontario Region, Cornwall, 1982.

[39] Parks Canada, *Interpretation Plan: Point Pelee National Park*, Draft, Ontario Region, Cornwall, 1976.

[40] Parks Canada, *op cit*, Ref 38.

best be interpreted and the extent to which each theme was important to each visitor activity group. A number of issues based on the relation of themes and visitor activity groups were also defined. For example, on-site theme orientation was found to be particularly weak for three market segments – swimmers (100 000), picnickers (105 000) and group campers (8000). The smelt fishing group, numbering about 20 000 and mainly originating from the USA, did nothing else in the park and were completely uninterested in park themes.[41] Birdwatchers, numerically (50 000) and politically important, demanded an exceptionally high level of service during periods of bird migrations.

The planning phase produced a strategy to interpret the park themes, to meet visitor group needs or service and to collect information to fill identified gaps.

The interpretation strategy identified five nodes in which interpretation themes/services might best be located. These 'interpretation activity nodes' (IANs) present particular and related themes in a specific setting of the park. One IAN is the Marsh Boardwalk and Tower, in existence since 1963, which emphasizes the Marsh and Great Lakes theme. Another is the point of the peninsula, the Tip, where migratory birds, Carolinian Canada, Lake Erie erosion/deposition and general Parks Canada themes are presented.

Directing messages and services to target visitor markets is an integral part of the strategy. For the smelt fishing group mentioned above, only a general national park message with supportive safety, use and fisheries regulation information is presented. This group does not warrant personalized service since the activity is quite peripheral to Point Pelee's mandate. Another group, butterfly watchers, are directed to the visitor centre where other park themes can be introduced through personalized service. An adjunct service is a 'butterfly hot-line' which facilitates trip planning by telling callers when butterflies are in the park.

Finally, the strategy outlines data and research needs which may be general or quite specific to groups or themes. For instance, the general pattern of use in the park is reasonably well-known but the specifics of use patterns by visitor activity groups remains elusive. The application of VAMP has provided a framework within which requirements for market information could be specified for a visitor study (1985–86) in preparation for a proposed management plan review. Although this pilot project focused on interpretation, the results of the approved interpretation plan (1987) have facilitated development of visitor services and public safety plans with minimal new data collection.[42]

Visitor services planning – Kejimkujik National Park

Kejimkujik National Park in eastern Canada is located in central southwestern Nova Scotia (see Figure 6). The 380-km^2 park was established by Parks Canada in 1967 to protect and manage a natural area of national significance representing important features of the Atlantic coastal uplands. The gentle rolling landscape with numerous lakes interconnected by rivers provides excellent canoeing and back-country camping opportunities. In addition, semi-serviced camping, group tenting, picnicking, winter camping and crosscountry skiing opportunities attract about 210 000 visitors per year. A majority of the park visitors originates from within a 150-km radius of the park and from nearby urban centres such as Halifax (160 km), Yarmouth (190 km), and St John, New Brunswick via ferry (160 km).

[41] Smelts. Small salmon-like fish.

[42] Market Facts, *Kejimkujik Visitor Survey: Summer, 1982*, Parks Canada, Socio-Economic Branch, Headquarters, Ottawa, 1984.

[42] Parks Canada, *Interpretative Plan: Point Pelee National Park*, Ontario Region, Cornwall, 1987.

Kejimkujik National Park was the first national park to have a management plan developed under the approved process in the late 1970s. As an established park with a park management plan, Kejimkujik was chosen for pilot work in the development of VAMP.

The pilot work on visitor activity management was completed in two phases:

- Phase I: development of 26 activity profiles to understand the activities in the park (September 1981–December 1982);
  development of a process for determining appropriate activities and prioritizing the same for management planning; and
  visitor market study.[43]
- Phase II: development of a summer season visitor services plan.

Phase I concentrated on the development of the visitor activity profile concept as a basis for creating an understanding of visitor activities in order to facilitate visitor management.[44] It was first necessary, however, to determine the compatibility and appropriateness of the visitor activities available within the park according to a set of national and in-park criteria. Appropriate activities were ranked using several scales to determine priorities among activities in terms of visitor activity profiles and park management.

Detailed profiles on 26 activities were subsequently prepared using secondary data and long-term staff's experiential knowledge. Mullen argues that much of the value of profiling lies in park staff involvement, leading to increased understanding of the activities themselves.[45] Visitor activity profiles have now been developed to the point where a standard format for a series of national activity profiles has been created.

While the Park Management Plan for Kejimkujik National Park was comprehensive, a major drawback was the lack of direction provided to guide the management of visitor use.[46] Park managers had little knowledge of visitors' behavioural characteristics with which to manage the growing tension between preservation and use. A visitor segmentation study was completed in 1982 and re-analysed in 1984 to provide information on user images of the park, visitor expectations, visitor activities, visitor decision-making processes, visitor evaluation of park experiences, and visitor sociodemographics.

Phase II of the pilot work at Kejimkujik involved confirming what the final product (a summer season visitor services plan) would include, defining the process required to develop the strategy and identifying the data needed to create the plan. It was determined that in order to prepare the plan the following steps should be taken:

- familiarization and consultation;
- data assembly and analysis:
  1. existing facilities, services and activities;
  2. users, park use patterns, and potential visitors and trends; and
  3. evaluation of facilities/services and use;
- synthesis – issues and options; and
- plan formulation.

However, work on Phase II ceased when it became apparent that no regional analysis existed. A fundamental component of the approach was the activity package concept for this national park. An activity package is a group of visitor services designed to provide a certain segment of the park visitor population with a satisfactory visitor experience, thereby meeting the goals of the visitors and the park. Implicit in this approach is the need to satisfy both sets of goals while minimizing Parks Canada expenditure of funds and person-years.

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[43] S. Robertson and A. Wright, *Kejimkujik Visitor Survey*, Parks Canada, Atlantic Region, Halifax, 1983.

[44] G. Tayler, *A Management Process for National Parks Visitor Activities*, Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1981.

[45] E. Mullen, *Final Report: Recreation Activity Planning Project*, Kejimkujik National Park, Wildland Associates, Halifax, 1982.

[46] Parks Canada, *Management Plan: Kejimkujik National Park*, Atlantic Region, Halifax, 1978.

This approach requires the segmentation of the total potential visitor population by activity and the definition of the major characteristics of significant target markets. An activity package can then be suggested for each activity group that the park might serve, subject to Parks Canada policy, the Park Management Plan and other management directives.

The application of VAMP in this management context provides park staff with a more comprehensive understanding of the range of existing visitor activities and priorities for future management action. Additional requirements relating to visitor services for specific target markets were also summarized and options to address them were put forward. Finally, additional social science and resource information requirements to guide future research were identified. The park undertook a regional visitor demand analysis to assess its potential market and to address issues related to identified markets in 1986.

Reflections and research directions

The Visitor Activity Management Process continues to evolve and be modified as it comes into wider use, and as new concepts and techniques are developed. National park planning and management is substantially improved by the recognition, through VAMP, that social science, marketing and management information systems help to understand, serve and communicate with the visitor. As a management process, VAMP assists in streamlining information collection, identifying revenue generation potential, specifying opportunities for volunteer involvements, reappraising scale of development and improving visitor satisfaction.

Parks Canada began the development of VAMP by identifying a basic conceptual framework to look at visitor use in national parks. The framework in draft form was then examined at the park, regional, headquarters and senior management levels. The identification of knowledge areas, techniques and skills as well as their relationship with VAMP outputs was facilitated by consulting academics, planners and managers in relevant fields. Formal and informal training of park personnel over the last five years has clearly identified the pressures related to the introduction of this system. Pilot studies of the process were conducted within Parks Canada's planning and management system to illustrate outputs and their potential in contributing to a more outward-looking organization, capable of communicating with its publics.

At present, VAMP is a flexible management framework, undergoing transition and change. This framework must not become an end in itself, merely justifying design and development of services, programmes and facilities. Case study research which highlights the effective use of VAMP will be required.

Further development of VAMP will require a supportive organizational environment, a condition not easily found in an era of constraint and pressure for more efficient management. Managers will require evidence that VAMP achieves the benefits claimed for it.

Past management plans for national parks were primarily potential development scenarios. VAMP contributions will result in a major shift of emphasis in Parks away from a reactive controlled development-orientated mode to a pro-active recreation resource management mode.

Implementing VAMP will present Parks with some difficult technical and organizational problems with respect to the current zoning system. There is no capability in the park management planning process which can be called upon to express VAMP input spatially. If visitor and resource concerns are to be integrated effectively, this problem will have to be overcome. VAMP remains a framework, a skeleton in need of further development to establish a technical capability. In spite of the promise shown in pilot projects, the uncertainty over technical steps in the framework continues to be a problem for managers in the national parks.

VAMP purports to go much further than ROS, especially in using marketing concepts, managing exchange relations and developing linkages to service planning (interpretation, visitor sources and public safety). The relative strengths and weaknesses of the two approaches and the potential relations between them require further exploration.

VAMP represents a flexible conceptual framework to integrate social science and natural science data in park area identification, planning and management.

Finally, the natural robustness of experiential, informal and indigenous knowledge of custom and tradition, when applied to park management planning, will contribute to successful national park proposals and parks in Canada, especially in the three northern territories. One of VAMP's most significant elements is its capability to utilize such information.

READINGS ON THE
VISITOR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS (VAMP)

4. Graham, R. 1990

"Visitor Management and Canada's National Parks" in Towards Serving Visitors and Managing Our Resources, Proceedings of a North American Workshop on Visitor Management in Parks and Protected Areas, Tourism Research and Education Centre, University of Waterloo and Environment Canada, Parks Service.

VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND CANADA'S NATIONAL PARKS

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INTRODUCTION

The Parliament of Canada gave the Canadian Parks Service the mandate to protect for all time those places which are significant examples of the nation's natural and cultural heritage and to enhance public appreciation and understanding of this heritage in ways which leave it unimpaired for future generations. Currently 34 national parks and park reserves represent approximately 54% of Canada's terrestrial diversity, of which more than half of the total area lies north of 60 (Table 1).

The National Marine Parks program, which has existed since 1986, currently represents about 7% of the nation's marine heritage through one national marine park and one national marine park reserve (Fathom Five in Ontario and South Moresby National Marine Park Reserve in British Columbia).

During the environmental movement of the sixties, many industrialized nations, including Canada, established Departments of the Environment in response to public opinion about pollution. Unfortunately, these departments were often restricted in their approach to problems. Politicians felt that by targeting "green issues" governments would be perceived by the public as being effective in protecting the environment. Although this targeting increased the "profile of the environment" as a social and political issue, it often led to situations in which social, economic and environmental concerns were not fully integrated. As a consequence, unresolved problems began to emerge for agencies whose policy optic and program implementation related to the environment was restricted to "green environmental concerns."

This paper traces the extent to which a concern about people and the environment has penetrated the "mind" of the Canadian Parks Service by offering an external perspective on Environment Canada's Visitor Activity Management Process (VAMP) (Parks Canada, 1985). The fact that Parks is in the process of developing an evolving decision building framework that will contribute to a more integrated approach to management of protected areas represents an awakening of interest in the interconnectedness of social and environmental concerns in Canadian national protected area programs.

TABLE 1: CANADA'S NATIONAL PARKS AND NATIONAL PARK RESERVES (R)

October 1988

National Park/Reserve (R)	Year Established	Park Area Sq. Kilometres	Sq. Miles
1) Banff, Alberta	1885	6,640.8	2,564.0
2) Glacier, British Columbia	1886	1,349.6	521.0
3) Yoho, British Columbia	1886	1,313.1	507.0
4) Waterton Lakes, Alberta	1895	525.8	203.0
5) Jasper, Alberta	1907	10,878.0	4,200.0
6) Elk Island, Alberta	1913	194.3	75.0
7) Mount Revelstoke, B.C.	1914	262.6	101.4
8) St. Lawrence Islands, Ont.	1914	0.8	0.3
9) Point Pelee, Ontario	1918	15.5	6.0
10) Kootenay, British Columbia	1920	1,406.4	543.0
11) Wood Buffalo, Alta., N.W.T.	1922	44,807.0	17,300.0
12) Prince Albert, Saskatchewan	1927	3,874.6	1,496.0
13) Riding Mountain, Manitoba	1929	2,975.9	1,149.0
14) Georgian Bay Islands, Ont.	1929	14.2	5.5
15) Cape Breton Highlands, N.S.	1936	950.5	367.0
16) Prince Edward Island, P.E.I.	1937	25.9	10.0
17) Fundy, New Brunswick	1948	205.9	79.5
18) Terra Nova, Newfoundland	1957	396.5	153.0
19) Pacific Rim, B.C. (land & water)	1970/1987**	499.6*	192.8*
20) Gros Morne, Newfoundland	1973	1,942.5*	750.0*
21) Kejimkujik, Nova Scotia	1974	381.5	147.3
22) Forillon, Quebec	1974	240.4	92.8
23) Kluane, Yukon (R)	1976	22,015.0	8,500.0
24) Nahanni, N.W.T. (R)	1976	4,765.6	1,840.0
25) Auyuittuq, N.W.T. (R)	1976	21,471.1	8,290.0
26) La Mauricie, Quebec	1977	543.9	210.0
27) Pukaskwa, Ontario	1978	1,877.8*	725.0*
28) Kouchibouguac, New Brunswick	1979	238.8	92.2
29) Grasslands, Saskatchewan	1981/1988*	906.5*	350.0*
30) Ellesmere Island (R)	1982	39,500.0	15,251.0
31) Mingan Archipelago, Quebec (R)	1984	150.7	58.2
32) Northern Yukon, Yukon	1984	10,168.4	3,926.0
33) Bruce Peninsula (land & water)	1987	262.5*	97.5*
34) Fathom Five Marine Park	1987	--	--
35) South Moresby (R) (land only)	1988	1,470.4*	567.7*
TOTALS		**182,272.1**	**70,375.3**

* Lands not yet scheduled under the National Parks Act.

** Dates of initial and revised federal-provincial agreements.

SOURCE: Eidsvik, H. et al 1988. People and Parks: Visits to National Parks by Ecozone. Draft State of the Environment Series, Report - CPS #1. Ottawa: Parks

BACKGROUND

Policies which have shaped the development of Parks and which guide the agency's current emphasis on preservation in terrestrial parks, conservation in marine parks and appropriate use in both types of parks, have evolved over the last century as national needs became recognized. Parks' genealogy and transition from multiple use to an approach where preservation and conservation of resources are the primary concern and essential rationale for the service can be traced to the establishment of a federal reserve adjacent to the Banff Hot Springs in 1885.

During the first 25 years of the Parks Service's evolution, there was a national need for areas that could "...produce maximum dollar return to the country from resource exploitation and tourist travel ..." (Turner and Rees, 1973:32). However, J.B. Harkin, the first Commissioner of National Parks (1911-1936), felt that future success of the fledgling parks' program required a mandate that included both preservation and visitor use. Harkin remarked that without an awareness and appropriate use of parks, it would be impossible for the agency to generate sufficient political support and funds to expand the system (Nelson, 1982:47). Several different pieces of legislation and Orders-in-Council were used between 1886 and 1930 to establish 14 other parks, but it was not until the passage of the National Parks Act (1930) that there was an official public announcement of the agency's dual mandate of preservation and use.

Some of Parks' responsibilities have been described in the National Parks Act and its revisions, (Canada, 1930, 1970 amended 1974), Bill C-30, (Canada, 1988), and parks' policy. Some have been added by Orders-in-Council, some are the results of international agreements, treaties and understandings, and some have come about as solutions to problems. In some cases (e.g. the Parks Canada Policy of 1979 and the National Marine Parks Policy of 1986) policies have been explicitly stated, in other cases they have arisen through serendipity.

Over the past 20 years, there have been numerous requests and proposals by the Auditor General of Canada, internal functional reviews of the agency, field managers (in particular Interpretation Services) and environmental non-governmental organizations to better define park visitor experiences, settings for these experiences and approaches to communicate Parks' critical role as flagship of the nation's effort to preserve and conserve our heritage. Balancing the tension between the resource and the user during the late nineteenth century and into the late 60's was accomplished in the Canadian Parks Service by focusing research, planning and management efforts on the resource base. This included conducting an inventory of the biotic, abiotic and cultural attributes of an area to identify the "capability and capacity" for the resource. This inventory was then used to designate areas within a park or historic site for preservation and use. Plans developed in this era were concerned almost exclusively with the resource, infrastructure and location of facilities in the park.

As Canada moved into the post-war and the environmental decades, it became increasingly apparent that the linear, comprehensive, rational planning model used by Parks increased dissatisfaction among a wide range of publics. Park proposals in eastern Canada were turned down by provinces. Customary users (Dasmann, 1974) and stake holders (Lerner, 1986) repeatedly asked that they be able to review agency information, studies and decisions in plans before decisions were made. Expropriation, regional integration, and social and economic impact were identified by the Auditor General and LaForest and Roy (1981) as areas within parks planning and management that were neither fully explained to the public nor effectively integrated in decision processes.

While social/political factors were informally recognized by Parks Canada as one of the most important criteria in establishing a park, these factors were generally felt not to be an integral component of park planning and management.

The comprehensive rational planning model (Figure 1) used to develop these plans, seemed increasingly unable to provide management with an understanding of how the agency should define the relationship between social and biophysical systems and to analyze the effects of alternative park management and planning scenarios.

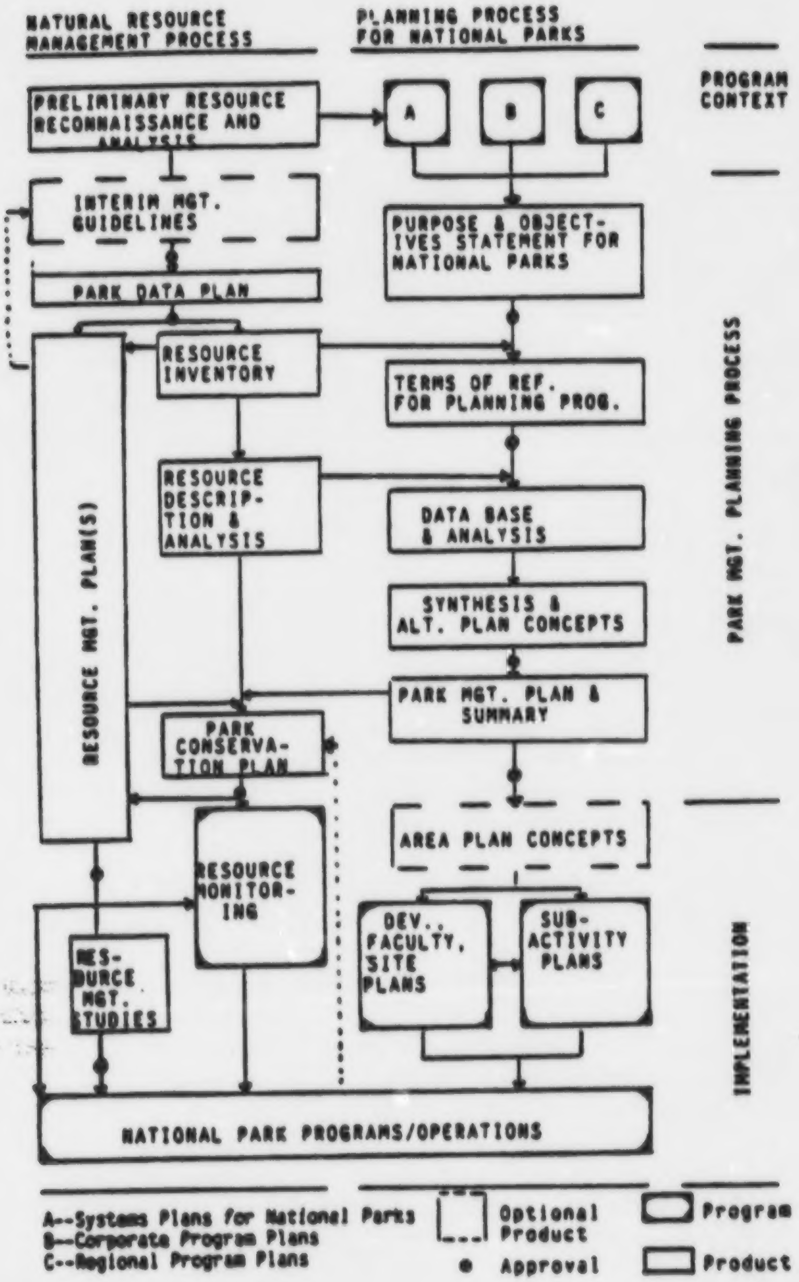
More important, interdependence, cooperation, mutual learning and trust, four of the most important criteria for continued preservation and conservation of protected areas were not explicitly acknowledged as part of building a vision for a park. Interdependence occurs in situations involving regulatory communities (agencies) and regulated communities (public and private customary users and stakeholders) where both an agency and different groups are linked functionally and have the opportunity to reward and punish each other's behaviours (Axelrod, 1984).

According to Axelrod, both regulators and regulated will usually work toward a cooperative style of planning and management provided the cooperation increases meaningful exchanges between the involved actors.

An example of interdependence and mutual learning that occurred in the 1960's and 1970's was the perceived lack of public involvement in the development of Parks' plans, culminating in the public outcry related to the Village Lake Louise proposal in 1972. Confusion about how the public was to be involved in developing plans for parks, and the appearance of some plans that seemed to contain decisions about direction related to preservation and use, created turbulent situations and what some groups saw as unpredictable changes in future parks management.

In 1978, after a decade of difficulties during public hearings on park planning, Parks Canada released guidelines on public participation in management planning (Olson, 1976; Hoole, 1976 and Gougeon, 1985). These guidelines operationalized one of the earlier-noted foundations of continued preservation or conservation of an area: interdependence - shared understandings of acceptable behaviour of the

Figure 1


NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS
PLANNING PROCESS FOR NATIONAL PARKS
PROGRAM CONTEXT
PRELIMINARY RESOURCE RECONNAISSANCE AND ANALYSIS
A
B
C
INTERIM MGT. GUIDELINES
PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES STATEMENT FOR NATIONAL PARKS
PARK DATA PLAN
RESOURCE INVENTORY
TERMS OF REF. FOR PLANNING PROG.
PARK MGT. PLANNING PROCESS
RESOURCE DESCRIPTION & ANALYSIS
DATA BASE & ANALYSIS
RESOURCE MGT. PLAN(S)
SYNTHESIS & ALT. PLAN CONCEPTS
PARK MGT. PLAN & SUMMARY
PARK CONSERVATION PLAN
AREA PLAN CONCEPTS
RESOURCE MONITORING
DEV., FACULTY, SITE PLANS
SUB-ACTIVITY PLANS
RESOURCE MGT. STUDIES
IMPLEMENTATION
NATIONAL PARK PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS
A--Systems Plans for National Parks
B--Corporate Program Plans
C--Regional Program Plans
Optional Product
Approval
Program
Product

OVERALL PLANNING FRAMEWORK. Source: Parks Canada, 1978.

regulator and the regulated. Public consultation (Parks Canada, 1979) was formalized by including a statement on public involvement in Parks' strategic activities in the Parks Canada Policy (Parks Canada, 1980).

To encourage the development of both public and agency understanding of the management of natural and cultural resources at a site, Parks developed a problem solving process - Natural Resource Management Process (Parks Canada, 1978) - but the companion piece related to formalizing an understanding of the interdependence between people and the resource - the Visitor Activity Management Process - did not receive formal attention for almost a decade. Thus, identifying an agency approach to identify visitor needs/expectations, select appropriate visitor opportunities, communicate with the public, manage rather than regulate visitor settings and meet diverse needs of the public within a series of zones or settings within and external to the park, continued to be considered within a planning system whose major input was site-specific natural and cultural resource information.

It is only recently within the Canadian Parks Service that data related to the care of biological and cultural resources have begun to be combined with information about the dimensions and nature of human use, to build preservation and use decisions within systems and management plans.

Part of the driving force behind the emerging role of social science in Parks planning and management occurred in 1973 with the establishment of the Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Process and several reviews of Parks Canada's activities by the Auditor General of Canada. These reviews noted that Parks Canada was not required to take into account the full range of implications of their decisions related to system and management planning. Full range of implications included the need to implement environmental, social and economic assessment and impact reviews in all planning and management activities.

Another report of the Auditor General and the Lambert Commission (Canada, 1979), targeted inefficient allocation of resources, lack of evaluation and the need for better financial management as keys to controlling government expenditures. Indirect reinforcement of the aforementioned recommendations had surfaced three years earlier in 1976 when Cabinet and Treasury Board introduced a Policy and Expenditure Management System (PEMS) (Canada, 1976). PEMS required government departments to thoroughly assess and regularly evaluate resourcing requirements related to policy and program changes.

In response to these initiatives and other concerns, the 1979 National Parks Policy and the 1986 National Marine Parks Policy included sections directing the agency to review potential impacts of unit plans and development proposals; to enhance the Parks Service's ability to apply a broad range of social science research methods, techniques and information in support of planning and management functions; and to develop a sensitivity to park-related regional socio-economic concerns.

This was followed in 1983 by a management directive within Parks (Socio-Economic Analysis in Management Plans, Parks Canada, 1983) that formally identified the general roles and responsibilities of the socio-economic function in park selection, establishment, planning and management.

During the same period, a Canadian Federal-Provincial Task Force on Interpretation (Federal Provincial Parks Conference, 1975) concluded that parks and heritage agencies could more effectively present both interpretation and public education programs to target audiences. The report called for interpreters to use communication theory and marketing approaches to convey resource management issues and guidelines.

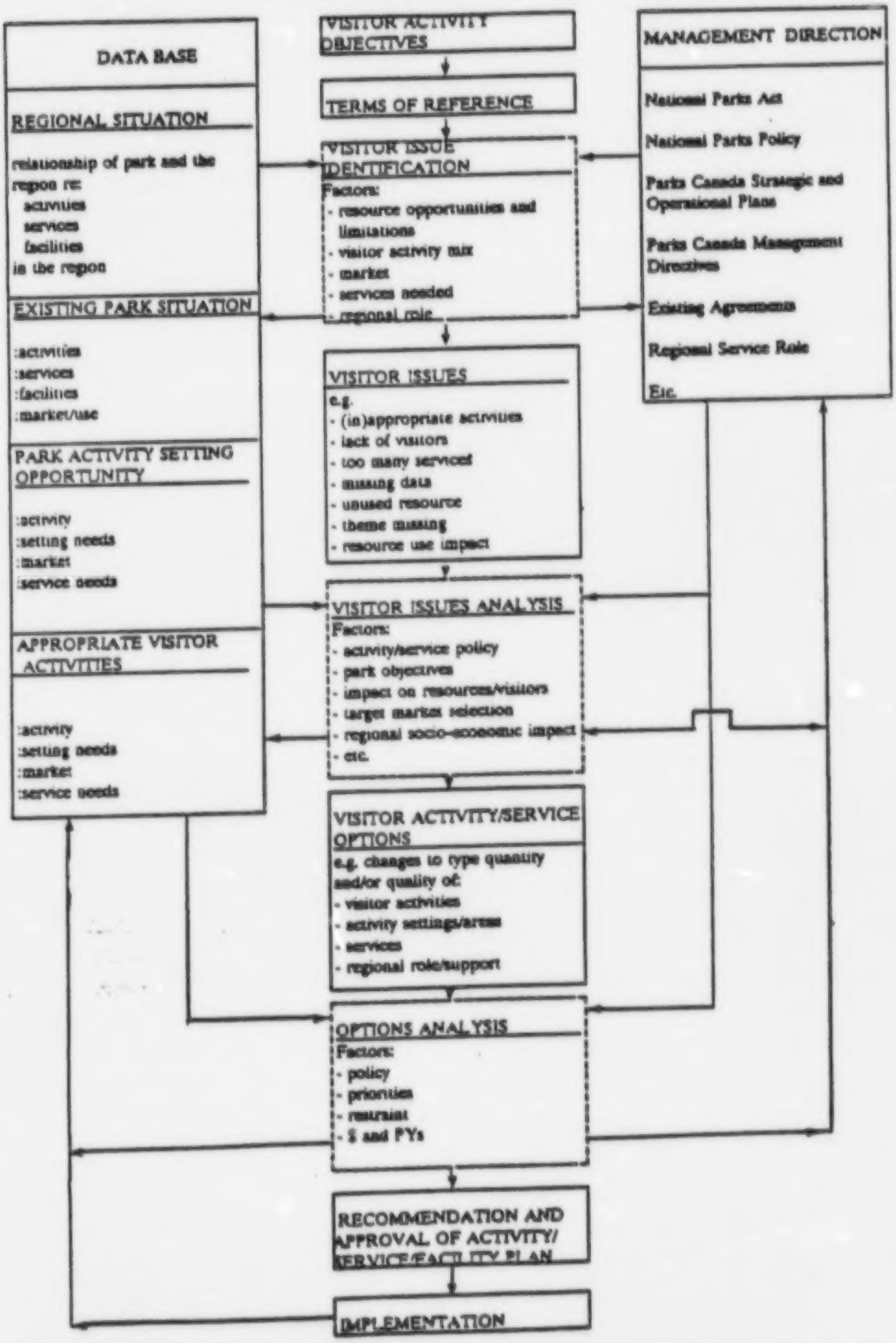
In addition, there was pressure by government to reduce spending on program and person year expenditures related to the environment. Some politicians noted that Canada's parks and heritage areas were "our best kept secret" while others asked if current program expenditures could be directed more effectively.

The need for a "decision building framework" that would better integrate a "human face" in heritage area management and planning was first noted publicly by Parks Canada in 1975 at a federal-provincial parks conference. After listening to the final report of the Federal-Provincial Task Force on Interpretation, Steve Kuhn, then the Director General of National Parks, provided attendees with a vision of Parks planning and management that began to depart from traditional approaches of the past. Central to that vision was the need to make better decisions regarding visitors. This direction from a senior manager was followed up during the next six years by internal functional reviews and task forces, a senior management perspective (the Brooks Report, 1980), approximately 120 demonstration projects in three of Parks' five regions, undergraduate and graduate theses research, numerous communications and reviews of US public land agency planning and management frameworks, and conversations with representatives from Canadian and American universities and heritage agency scientists and administrators.

Development of a model that was approved by Parks' Program Management Committee in 1981, led to publication of two draft documents. The Management Process for Visitor Activities [VAMP] released in 1985 describes a conceptual or thought process that helps define the range of data needed at each stage of systems and management planning and why the data are required (Parks Canada, 1985 and Figure 2). The role of management direction, decision points and management products were defined to illustrate the relationship with management planning. VAMP was also conceived to encourage decision building and increased involvement of individuals from a variety of branches and levels within the Canadian Parks Service.

Figure 2

GENERIC REPRESENTATION OF VAMP


DATA BASE
REGIONAL SITUATION
relationship of park and the region re:
activities
services
facilities
in the region
EXISTING PARK SITUATION
:activities
:services
:facilities
:market/use
PARK ACTIVITY SETTING OPPORTUNITY
:activity
:setting needs
:market
:service needs
APPROPRIATE VISITOR ACTIVITIES
:activity
:setting needs
:market
:service needs
VISITOR ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES
TERMS OF REFERENCE
VISITOR ISSUE IDENTIFICATION
Factors:
- resource opportunities and limitations
- visitor activity mix
- market
- services needed
- regional role
VISITOR ISSUES
e.g.
- (in)appropriate activities
- lack of visitors
- too many services
- missing data
- unused resource
- theme missing
- resource use impact
VISITOR ISSUES ANALYSIS
Factors:
- activity/service policy
- park objectives
- impact on resources/visitors
- target market selection
- regional socio-economic impact
- etc.
VISITOR ACTIVITY/SERVICE OPTIONS
e.g. changes to type quantity and/or quality of:
- visitor activities
- activity settings/areas
- services
- regional role/support
OPTIONS ANALYSIS
Factors:
- policy
- priorities
- restraint
- $ and PYs
RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL OF ACTIVITY/ SERVICE/FACILITY PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION
MANAGEMENT DIRECTION
National Parks Act
National Parks Policy
Parks Canada Strategic and Operational Plans
Parks Canada Management Directives
Existing Agreements
Regional Service Role
Etc.

The VAMP Process
Source: Parks Canada, 1985a. Management Process for Visitor Activities. Ottawa: Parks Canada.

Regional and national orientation and training followed in conjunction with applications of the model and process during management planning throughout 1985-87. Evaluation of the initial integration of VAMP during management planning in 1986 and 1987 revealed that it would be more appropriate to concentrate on the development of service plans (an integration of interpretation, visitor services and public safety) in implementing VAMP at this time. In 1986, Parks released a "hands-on guideline" to service planning entitled Getting Started. After workshops, review and applications two successive revisions were developed (Canadian Parks Service, 1988). National and regional orientation and training followed. The last national training course is planned for 1989, however several regional courses will continue over the next few years.

VAMP and its use in system, management and service planning recognizes and formalizes the need and importance of social science information and natural and cultural data for assessing any action in protected areas. As a framework it represents a way of thinking - a thought process about protected areas and the relationship between diversity of their visitors; concessionaires; inholders; adjacent landowners; communities and the Parks Service.

The question is not so much who or what was in command of this increasing need for a flexible pro-active conceptual framework that integrated social science data and data about the natural and cultural environment into a protected area planning and management framework (see also Tayler, this volume). What is important is that the "Visitor Activity Management Process" emerged and was gradually developed, field tested and implemented primarily from within the organization. VAMP represents a penetration of the mind of the Canadian Parks Service that has begun to expand Parks awareness of the limitations of sole reliance on a "greening approach to environmental management" towards an approach that integrates social, economic and environmental issues in its planning and management activities.

THE VISITOR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS

The Visitor Activity Management Process or VAMP is a pro-active, flexible, conceptual framework that contributes to decision building related to the planning, development and operation of park-related services and facilities (Figure 3). It includes an assessment of regional integration of a park or heritage site, systematic identification of visitors, evaluation of visitor market potential, and identification of interpretive and educational opportunities for the public to understand, safely enjoy and appreciate heritage. The framework was developed to contribute to all five park management contexts: park establishment; new park management planning; established park planning and plan review; facility development and operation (Figure 3). The framework or thought process uses both natural and social science information to build decisions about access and use of a protected area. Finally, the

VAMP framework incorporates a format for evaluating the effectiveness in meeting public needs.

VAMP is not a cookbook or recipe. The process uses an iterative approach that requires information from resource inventories, user studies (beginning with a review of existing formal and informal data), the knowledge of park-based interpreters and visitor services personnel, and support from social scientists within and external to the agency. It is not a data-driven model, but is a problem and issue-driven model that asks planners and managers to set objectives, be explicit about assumptions, acknowledge data gaps, be realistic in terms of what can be changed through downscaling and reinvestment, and think beyond the boundaries of the park or site.

Within the Canadian Parks Service, a park, historic site or historic canal is generally acknowledged as a place of special meaning for visitors. People come to the area and engage in a range of recreational and leisure activities which may lead to a better understanding, and appreciation of the area's heritage. A manager of a park or historic site can relate to developing an understanding of visitor activities, because many of their management issues seem to be related to people. Thus, Parks initially developed the concept of VAMP around "what people do in a park" - activities - an approach that most managers felt comfortable with. Although many of the ideas in VAMP are related to some of the concepts in ROS (i.e. the planner and manager's need to understand relationships between settings, experiences and activities), it was felt that VAMP would receive support within the agency if it initially concentrated on what the agency knew about its various publics and then on developing an understanding of visitors' needs and expectations related to activities, services and facilities - all of which are not the responsibility of Parks. Infusion of additional social science information into decision making was not to be represented by a "data hungry process." However, the long-term goal is to have planners and managers think of natural or historic areas not just as spaces - natural ecosystems - but as places that are important heritage opportunities/experiences for visitors. In other words, VAMP's definition of the ecology of a protected area includes natural and cultural resources as well as people.

As noted earlier, the Visitor Activity Management Process initially relies on social and natural science information collected during systems and management planning of a park and on data collected by other agencies, organizations and institutions with an interest in the regional context of the park. This formal knowledge, along with the informal knowledge within the agency, visitors, and customary users is used to respond to questions about who comes to a site, what is bringing people there as well as keeping them away, and what, when and how services and facilities should be provided (Parks Canada, 1985; Payne, Graham and Nilsen, 1986; Nilsen, 1987; Graham, Payne and Nilsen, 1988 and Environment Canada, Canadian Parks Service, 1988).

However, what is understood through formal knowledge about Canadian protected area visitors, other than attendance, is currently very limited. Knowledge of where they go, what they do, the relationship between services offered, visitors' use of services and visitor satisfaction is somewhat tentative.

This is not to say that the Socio-Economic Branch of Parks has not developed and implemented sophisticated research and models since the Canadian Outdoor Recreation Demand Studies (CORDS). Requirements from Treasury Board and Management Board of Cabinet for social science information during systems planning and park establishment have been met and several models (e.g. Local Economic Impact and the Life Cycle Costing models) and data management systems (e.g. PURDS - see Beaman and Grimm, this volume) are being developed, field tested and starting to be used to support management planning and investment decisions (deLang and Horne, 1988). There is an excellent source of experience, capability and knowledge within the agency, but until Parks suggested the VAMP model and a process to guide visitor research during park planning and management studies, most managers felt that the applicability gap was too large for social science research to provide guidance during planning and management activities

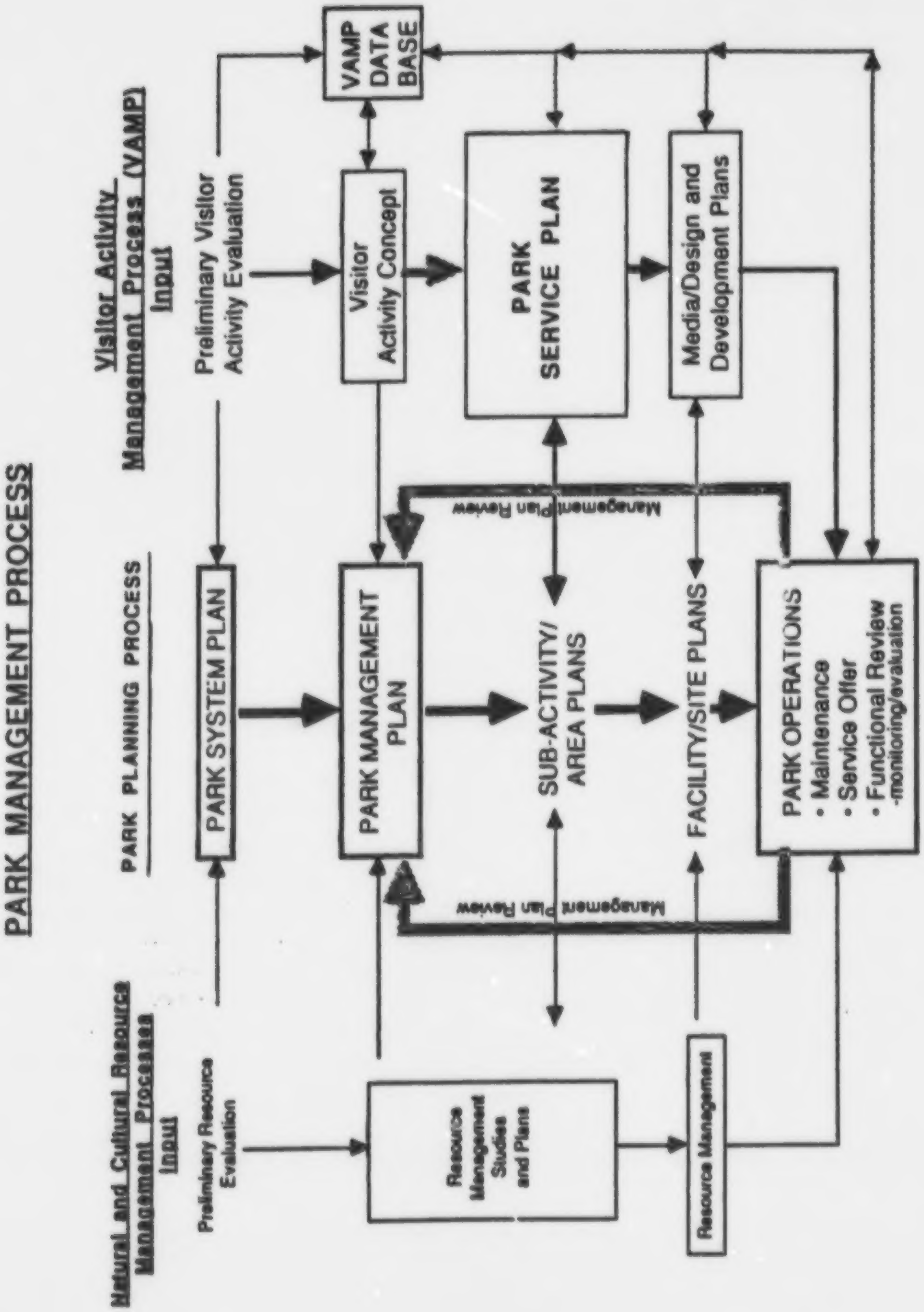
VAMP can also be viewed initially as an applied research framework - a way of thinking - that will gradually increase the professionalization in the Canadian Parks Service's approach to visitor management and eventually lead to implementation of information systems that combine both natural and social science data in developing additions to the system and building management plans.

Figure 3 illustrates the Canadian Parks Service's current management process. Planning is depicted in the centre as a spine, with two supporting management processes: one provides the planner/manager with information about natural resources or natural science data from resource management studies and plans, while the other provides analysis and information to identify and determine social and economic factors related to the identification, selection, planning and management of Canadian Parks Service historic and natural areas.

The concept of management in both VAMP and the natural resource management process refers to managing the tension between the resource and the user. Thus VAMP is not a process to justify random development at a site; rather it is a framework, an aid both to understanding visitor behaviour and, where necessary to modifying it. The process when applied has not perpetuated the status quo or risked capital and person year investment.

The Visitor Activity Management Process directs the planner and manager to begin by considering the implications of including an understanding of people in protected-area planning and management.

Figure 3


PARK MANAGEMENT PROCESS
Natural and Cultural Resource Management Processes Input
Preliminary Resource Evaluation
Resource Management Studies and Plans
Resource Management
PARK PLANNING PROCESS
PARK SYSTEM PLAN
PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN
SUB-ACTIVITY/ AREA PLANS
FACILITY/SITE PLANS
PARK OPERATIONS
• Maintenance
• Service Offer
• Functional Review -monitoring/evaluation
Management Plan Review
Management Plan Review
Visitor Activity Management Process (VAMP) Input
Preliminary Visitor Activity Evaluation
Visitor Activity Concept
PARK SERVICE PLAN
Media/Design and Development Plans
VAMP DATA BASE

Park Management Process Source: Environment Canada, Parks, 1988. Getting Started. Ottawa: Visitor Services and Interpretation.

Adapted from: Payne, Graham and Nilsen, 1986.

The questions that guide the process include: (1) Who are the parks current and potential visitors? (2) What is the current situation re: use of an area [who comes, what do they do, and how does this information relate to visitor needs, expectations and demands for that site and its related capabilities?] (3) What should Parks be offering at a site and how should that level of service be adjusted in terms of existing policy and current and projected use? (4) Are visitors satisfied with their use of a site?

During systems planning it is especially important to identify expectations and needs of those currently using an area and those who will be attracted to the new park. This information should then be combined with the preliminary identification of the proposed site's heritage values, purpose and objectives as the presence or absence of this data may affect later funding and planning decisions. A brief description of potential opportunities the proposed site presents (for visitors to experience their heritage and possible range of activities, location conditions and size of visitor markets, and socio-economic impacts of the proposed heritage area) should also be included during the systems planning process. To date this is the least developed portion of VAMP.

Decisions about the provision of public opportunities made through management planning or plan review relate to the purpose and role of the park, type and location of appropriate activities, the existing and future market for these activities, and the relationship of what the park is offering to what is offered within the region.

During service planning, the planner and manager are directed to focus attention on what will happen in the park's immediate short-term future. This is accomplished by translating the conceptual direction of the Park Management Plan into a detailed offer of services to the public - a service plan. Considerable effort during service planning is dedicated to identifying the need for research related to refinement and adjustments to the visitor activity concept of the existing park management plan. What are the targeted markets or visitor activity groups? What are their needs/expectations for park-related activities and services? What basic levels of service should Parks provide? What types of delivery and support of these activities should Parks provide or should the agency encourage participation by partners, cooperating associations or the private sector? Service plans also include a section that describes direction with respect to multi-year operational funding for the park. This linkage is one of the important keys to implementing all plan decisions.

Strategic issues related to management planning identified during the development of the service plan are referenced for subsequent management plan review.

At present, application of the thought process in VAMP has been limited in systems and management planning. The development of service plans within the agency (see Tayler and Ashley, this volume) and a National VAMP Implementation

Strategy (see Sealey, this volume) are encouraging signs that visitor management is beginning to emerge as an important and distinct contributor to protected-area planning and to the establishment of management guidelines for parks and sites within Parks' jurisdiction. Service plans and park operations projects developed to date have illustrated that VAMP is capable of suggesting trade offs between recreational opportunities and environmental and public needs (see Reynolds, this volume and deLang and Horne, 1988). Linkages to project planning depend on a clear definition of the relationship between the service plan and the multi-year operational plan (MYOP) for the park or site being described in the service plan document.

The Visitor Activity Management Process is still in an evolutionary stage of its development and there are numerous issues yet to be resolved, but there is an evolving experience and series of products that represent an important contribution to park and protected-area management. It is too early to suggest an emerging paradigm, but it is possible to suggest some of the issues related to VAMP which Parks must resolve in the next five years. I have selected seven to offer a brief commentary.

Visitor Management and Heritage Areas: Does it Make A Difference?

Today and in the future there will be more rapid change than ever before. Parks, like other human services, must come to grips with these changes. Most often in the past when improvements in protected-area management were needed, requirements for more research on the flora and fauna were highlighted. Less often did we recognize that what was also needed was to understand more about the human-resource interactions. The Visitor Activity Management Process offers Parks a creative window of opportunity to make a difference in developing alternatives to manage the tension between the resource and the user. Managers will have to be shown that the process can contribute to efficient and effective practices that benefit the park or site, the visitor, stakeholder, and customary user. To answer this question, Parks will have to continue to circulate, review and monitor park service plans and encourage staff and researchers to think of visitor management and planning, not as an end point, but as a continuing thought process. Discussions related to VAMP should continue to be focused on alternative approaches, refinements and paradigm development.

VAMP, in its current applications, has already demonstrated a potential to aid in our understanding of protected-area planning and management as much as - and in most cases more than - traditional approaches. Its built-in, ongoing evaluation process can serve as a source of suggestions, additions and revisions to VAMP, management planning, and the natural resource management process.

Supporting use of VAMP within all five management contexts of the Parks Service is an important beginning. Remembering that it is a flexible conceptual framework for building creative decisions related to: use of settings; communication; constituency building; understanding interdependence; and issues of equity and monitoring, requires the Canadian Parks Service to recognize that protected-area planning and management today means the agency must move beyond regulating use and educating the visitor. To accomplish this Parks will have to both increase the caps on current visitor related planning research in combination with joint research initiatives with universities, cooperating associations and other partners.

VAMP as a Decision Building Framework in an Era and Environment of Uncertainty

The Parks Service is charged with the responsibility of planning their sites "in perpetuity." However, the degree of uncertainty increases dramatically when one begins to look beyond a short time frame of two to three years. In fact, uncertainty is a feature of most ecological systems, furthermore, the act of management alters relationships within these systems (Walters and Hilborn, 1978). Most of our research about natural ecosystems has given us only a partial observation of system functions and most of these studies have not included the socio-economic dynamics that are inherent in park-related resource management.

Because our present understanding of natural systems is very limited, it is difficult to explain completely how an ecological system functions. This was further complicated by the fact that computer capacity to access and use large data sets to model and identify persistent cues or indicators was often only available on a few centrally located main frames. However, the personal computer and fourth generation computer languages does make it easier for park professionals to build a data base, monitor the information, identify social and bio-indicators and acquire a quick in-house turn around time for research at the regional office and park level (see Beaman and Grimm, this volume).

Developing long-term site-specific information and analyzing historic experience is one of the strengths of VAMP. Unique analytic tools to substantiate and monitor proposed in-park or regional development and the level of funding for program initiatives are being developed by the Evaluation and Analysis Division of the Socio-Economic Branch of Parks and, where expertise and equipment exist, are starting to be used at the park level (see Grimm and Beaman, this volume and deLang and Horne, 1988).

VAMP is a framework that can help planners and managers select social science research methods and techniques to substantiate decisions related to the appropriate mix of opportunities, activities, services and facilities at a site. The framework quickly identifies strengths and weaknesses in the data and suggests initial approaches to data collection that long-range planning requires. More important, the framework institutionalizes development of a very rich data base that over time will enhance decision building under uncertainty.

Demonstrating visitor demand, providing reliable estimates of peak use, analyzing target markets and their needs and abilities, as well as reviewing life-cycle costs of a project are all currently possible within the VAMP framework. Thus VAMP, when fully implemented within the Canadian Parks Service should aid in developing a broader consensus about what the major uncertainties are and how managers may best try to build management decisions about the area.

What remains to be seen is the extent of implementation of the process and financial and person year commitment to VAMP.

Opportunity Assessment

When the VAMP model was developed, it was acknowledged that opportunity assessment was one of the important components of the framework. Some described it as a black box. Others felt that because opportunity assessment was not clearly defined and operationalized, VAMP would do nothing more than reinforce the status quo. A few expressed the opinion that the framework had no capability to review future potentials for a park.

Experience at Revelstoke-Glacier, Fundy, Terra Nova and Kootenay (see Reynolds, this volume and deLang and Horne, 1988 and 1989 and Environment Canada Parks, 1989) would tend to contradict this belief. In all three cases, VAMP was able to identify the need to downscale infrastructure and investment in one camping opportunity and level of service and shift investment to where better experiences could be offered, and future needs could best be met. VAMP identified enhanced current and future packages of opportunities in the front country and the region surrounding the parks.

In addition to the experience gained at Revelstoke-Glacier, there was another important spinoff. To those involved in the project, there was an understanding about its direction and product that made sense. To an objective outsider, there still seemed to be the need to look again at opportunity assessment. However, the decision building process encouraged by VAMP developed increased communication within the planning group, shared resourcing and a better response to managing the tension between the resource and the user than anything that had previously been attempted.

Many of us who worked on the evolution of VAMP were aware of the visitor management research related to ROS (see Clark, this volume), VIM (see Graefe, this volume) and LAC (see McCool, this volume) and some of the content of the presentations on recreation habitat (see Schreyer, Knopf and Clark, this volume). LAC, VIM and ROS offer possibilities to define and operationalize opportunity assessment within VAMP. The identification of a range of indicators from experience with all four of the models as well as suggestions for improved future applications of VAMP, ROS, LAC and VIM, may be accomplished through a future workshop or a cooperative demonstration project utilizing all four management frameworks.

VAMP and Marketing

In the early development of the VAMP model, many recognized that marketing tools and techniques could strengthen the understanding of current and future client groups and help build appropriate bridges to recreation and tourism programs.

However, there is a need to distinguish between service and product marketing and also between marketing and the broader efforts of social science in protected-area related research. While marketing may involve some potential overlap with the broader focus of visitor management research, it is important to note that there is a difference between marketing research, as such and the mandated and applied efforts by park social scientists. Marketing research cannot replace social science initiatives prescribed by Parks policy, Treasury Board guidelines and social, economic and environmental assessment and review process requirements. For example special events and festivals related to parks require good evaluation and impact related research in order to understand both the short term and long term benefits and costs related to this strategy of constituency building.

From opinion in the literature, comments among heritage agencies and environmental groups it is possible to state that all of us are divided on whether a product or service orientation to marketing is appropriate for protected area agencies. A product orientation connotes selling, profit, revenue generation, socio and demographic and geographic segmentation - an attempt to make heritage areas appeal to everyone. Service marketing places its emphasis on visitors and their experiences. Some of the exchanges in this perspective are intangible (e.g. the conversation between a visitor and interpreter at a visitor's reception centre) while others are more concrete. In the VAMP model, services are reviewed, discussed with the public and approved in conjunction with direction in policy. In the product context services are directed by profits, revenue potential and put through.

Some of the literature has argued that the product approach ignores two important elements - process and people - and that theory in the field of not for profit marketing and protected areas is currently evolving to a bottom up approach using real data to guide conceptual development (Gummesson, 1987). The top down force fitted approach that relies only on existing theoretical formulations may lead to: loss of constituents; erosion of community based development opportunities; lack of interest in participation on advisory committees and increased tension within the agency between those who are attempting to preserve or conserve the resource and those charged with managing visitors.

Emerging research in Europe, where some sectors of the economy have moved to a service orientation, are beginning to evolve approaches and concepts that are much better than the North American experience with its emphasis on television and large consumer oriented markets. Parks and heritage agencies should carefully monitor the european literature and particularly its approach to conceptual development, implementation and evaluation (Gronroos and Gummesson, 1985).

VAMP itself is a process that was developed to be integrated with existing decision processes within the Canadian Parks Service. People segmented into activity groups are one of the focuses of VAMP. With input from the new marketing initiative in Parks, the VAMP framework can become more efficient and effective in decisions related to access and use of protected areas. There is, however, a need to use social science theory to monitor, evaluate and guide marketing initiatives within protected area agencies.

VAMP as a Problem and Issue Driven Model

In giving its approval to VAMP, senior management within Parks directed that the process should not be data driven; rather, it should be problem and issue driven. This does not mean that information cannot be and should not be collected to develop a data base, but that it should encourage the planner and management to begin by identifying what already exists, and how data can be effectively and efficiently utilized from other national studies, regional studies and agencies (an example of this is The Canada-US Foreign Tourism, Attitudes and Motivation Studies; see Smith and O'Leary, this volume).

The VAMP framework as an organizational thought process also has the potential to help normalize and standardize social science data collection, beginning with park selection and extending through to management planning and monitoring of day-to-day management of the park. Careful assessment of existing qualitative and quantitative data and formal and informal knowledge enables managers and planners to identify data gaps and provide specific direction for subsequent research and planning.

Although secondary analysis of existing research is one of the strengths of VAMP, as it maximizes investment in existing research and moves everyone away from single-shot, ad hoc studies of the past, it has yet to be implemented regularly in VAMP applications.

VAMP and Experiential and Informal Knowledge

VAMP encourages the recording and use of experiential and informal knowledge of park staff, stakeholders, and customary users in developing a situation analysis of current and potential sites and visitors. As an example, if the Canadian Parks Service hopes to maintain and develop trusting relationships with native peoples and local populations, the identification and development of two-way communication networks is essential to the long-term success of a protected area. This cannot be established with current public participation programs, which tend to define more clearly the image of Parks planning as an upward aggregation of responsibility and authority, increasingly removed from the resource, users and affected communities (see Shands, this volume).

VAMP, if used appropriately to profile stakeholders and customary users and document their informal knowledge during area identification and management planning, offers the agency a unique opportunity to exchange data and preferences about a site before potential areas are designated or zoned. Trust, communication channels and cooperation may be enhanced by this step through VAMP. For example, the St. Lawrence Islands stakeholder profiling, developed during service planning, identified several opportunities for the park to work with regional organizations and agencies in developing partnerships, education programs, and an increased general awareness of the park as a unique heritage resource within the region.

VAMP's Linkages to Interpretation and Environmental Education

Recent research presented at the International Congress of Comparative Psychology (1988) in Australia indicated that there is not one public to whom conservation messages should be directed, but many different publics. There seemed to be some consensus on some urban beliefs and attitudes, but they are extremely different from the pattern identified among those who typically reside in rural areas.

Most of our current interpretive planning begins with the decision to designate a park, equivalent reserve, or protected area. The agency then decides on themes and messages related to the site's or area's natural and/or cultural phenomena with limited or minimal awareness of local and visitor behaviours, beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, misconceptions and expectations. Direction is set and investments are made in visitor centres, exhibits and messages that may not relate to the various publics attracted. This lack of formative visitor evaluation research also limits further evaluation and audience analysis research.

Tilden reminded us to "provoke, reveal and relate", but not to think that if everyone has the same information as the agency does, that people will make the same decisions the agency does and act just as wisely.

It is somewhat disquieting to see interpretive programs developing the "right information" to produce the "correct" information and set of beliefs for everybody, with limited or very little information about audiences' knowledge and beliefs. VAMP's recommended pro-active approach to profiling visitor activity groups, suggesting target messages and to evaluating during systems planning and before the development and design of interpretive messages and programs, offers much hope for more effective interpretation and environmental education programs provided system and management planners, managers and site superintendents are committed to implementing the process.

Some Concluding Thoughts

(i) The integration of informal and formal knowledge

To encourage acceptance of VAMP and facilitate its use within the agency, the process has drawn heavily on existing knowledge within the agency. However, customary users and stakeholders have had only extremely limited input to date in this process. Reluctance, lack of resources and commitment to this aspect of VAMP could jeopardize implementation of new parks and protected areas' or existing sites' long term sustainability. Successful conservation/preservation of areas depends on maintaining both the psychic and environmental habitats of indigenous and non-indigenous customary users. Documenting how indigenous people and customary users manage and perceive their relationship to a site's natural and cultural environment in time and space fosters mutual respect for both informal knowledge and agency formal knowledge. By creating a type of reciprocal awareness it may be possible to better articulate problems and develop combined strategies to mitigate and avoid major conflicts.

Pilot projects and research that identify the potential combined contribution of informal knowledge and formal knowledge to park planning and management should be implemented.

(ii) VAMP implementation to date could benefit from more comparative work between sites within the Canadian Parks Service and across other country's protected areas.

I think it will be necessary for all four of the decision frameworks discussed at this workshop to expand their horizons by looking at similarities and differences in their approaches. Attendance at protected areas has gradually risen throughout North America and abroad, and the travel and tourism people have stated that eco-tourism is one of the fastest growing markets within their industry.

Protected areas have the potential to offer exceedingly rich and varied experiences, but that experience is tied to continued quality of the resource. Carrying capacity has not provided us with an answer, but the decision frameworks highlighted in this workshop have the potential to build better access and use decisions.

However, this potential will only be realized if there is an effort to share and support each others' research initiatives, data, and analyses.

In a political era where cost effectiveness and efficiency will continue to dominate the headlines, managers will need to recognize that data is a common resource that needs to be shared and analyzed by other agencies, groups, and institutions. To some managers this is a frightening possibility, but the need to embrace the concept of pooled expertise, information and personnel will become immediately apparent within the next few years. The VAMP framework has a potential contribution to make in this area.

(iii) Development of a new type of protected area planner/manager

Walter Lusigi of IUCN has suggested in a recent paper (1986:4) that a need exists for developing a new type of protected area planner and manager. All of the decision frameworks use information from traditional disciplines like forestry, ecology, geology, history, and social sciences. However, what educational institutions are currently graduating as a potential planner or manager is one who is educated about the resource at their feet with limited understanding of social science and man-land relationships (see also Graham and Payne, 1987).

The new protected-area planner and manager will need to be a person whose broad education places equal emphasis on both the natural and social sciences. As Lusigi has stated, "...it is doubtful if this new type of manager can come out of existing institutions, although many could claim to be doing exactly what is required."

These are only three of the areas needing further development. There are many others, some of which include developing measures of benefits; determining how to lump and split each park's resources, opportunities and activities; determining how to evaluate satisfaction; and finding out how to develop instruments which would consistently build information systems across a parks system while developing meaningful criteria for segmenting park visitors.

The task of managing protected areas in perpetuity is formidable. Nevertheless it is one that heritage agencies have been given the mandate to undertake. In implementing the concept of heritage protection politicians, bureaucrats, scientists, the private sector and environmental non-governmental groups all have important roles to play. The agency challenge is to continue to develop effective mechanisms for involving these groups, their resources and knowledge in support of protected area management. All four of the decision frameworks highlighted at this workshop offer considerable opportunity in this area, if heritage agencies are willing to implement them.

CONCLUSION

The thrust of this paper at the outset was that both social and natural science information are necessary requirements in heritage area-planning and management and that both have a future, and that both, in a real sense, are now interlinked and necessary to each other. This conclusion leads us to hope that Canada's national protected-area agency has begun to grapple with the need for better integration of social, economic and environmental issues in decision building.

VAMP, like the other decision frameworks discussed at this workshop, is capable of contributing to the mandates of protected area-agencies. Decision frameworks, when implemented, help to 1) identify and define emerging protected-area opportunities and issues, 2) review and assess the consequence of previous approaches to protected-area management, 3) anticipate the consequences of present trends, 4) recommend guidelines and offer suggestions for appropriate programs and measures to prevent and ameliorate undesirable results, 5) encourage sharing of person years and resources, 6) and recast the science and scholarship of protected area management to reflect the importance of transdisciplinary efforts.

The question is how to go forward from here; the answer, I believe, must include further application, comparison and evaluation and development of decision frameworks. Yes, there are issues that have yet to be resolved and the frameworks are being applied and developed. But VAMP has provided Canadian protected-area planners and managers with a pro-active thought process that has the potential to develop better information about customary users, stakeholders, visitors, and non-visitors.

Who are our visitor activity groups? What motivates them to visit protected areas? What beliefs do they have about the agency and its programs? What benefits do they seek from Parks? How should the agency respond to their expressed behaviours, beliefs, knowledge and attitudes? What are the appropriate efficient and effective levels of service, communication and management that should be provided by Parks, the private sector and co-operating associations/partners?

When Canadian park and protected area planners and managers were initially exposed to these questions and the VAMP thought process they reacted with a full spectrum of emotions, ranging from approval and concurrence to disapproval and rejection. This diversity of values and orientations made possible the strength of dialogue that developed within Parks around VAMP. People involved (managers, planners, architects, engineers and social scientists) in VAMP-related projects have begun to assist each other to identify internal and external resources and internalized assumptions that had framed their approaches to protected area management. Some demonstration projects were co-funded by different branches. In these demonstration projects continuous critical analysis of assumptions, commonsense knowledge and management beliefs and behaviours were encouraged. What emerged was a framework that built decisions rather than one that made decisions.

Despite some of the concerns and unanswered questions, VAMP like the other decision frameworks represents an important contribution to pro-actively managing the tension between the resource and the user.

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READINGS ON THE VISITOR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS (VAMP)

5. Ashley, Robert. 1990

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18. THE VISITOR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS AND CANADIAN NATIONAL HISTORIC PARKS AND SITES - A NEW COMMITMENT TO THE VISITOR

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INTRODUCTION

This paper explains how National Historic Parks and Sites has become involved in implementing a Visitor Activity Management Process. It also attempts to describe what is now being done and what is being planned for VAMP implementation in National Historic Parks and Sites (N.H.P.& S.) and briefly relates some issues facing the adaption of VAMP and Service Planning to National Historic Parks.

While sharing some direction from the National Parks Act, N.H.P.& S. is governed by a different mix of legislation than National Parks. Other important legislation provides us with a particular master called the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (H.S.M.B.), an entity somewhat at arm's length from the government and entrusted with the task of recommending the commemoration of nationally significant cultural resources. The H.S.M.B., in turn, has an effect on the way planning is carried out and priorities are set in the historic parks and sites program. We manage some 80 plus National Historic Parks, nine Historic Canals, and hundreds of placqued sites.

But at the level of the park management process, other specialities like mine in interpretation and visitor services, and especially of parks operations, a lot of crossover occurs between the skills, experience, expertise and interests of National Parks and N.H.P.& S..

Park Management Planning processes, and especially interpretation, visitor services and media planning, have frequently shared the same methodologies and even the same formats throughout our agency. Hence, almost from the beginning, regional support specialists and field operators of N.H.P.& S. have shared in the testing and development of Park Service Planning, an application of the Visitor Activity Management Process (VAMP).

With its integration of all services provided in support of the visitor, VAMP made immediate sense to the managers of historic parks. Since interpretation was quite often the lead service provided to visitors at most medium- and small-sized historic parks, interpretation planning done at these sites tended to integrate all services to visitors anyway. That is, the interpretive experience was not seen as isolated from the parking, arrival and refreshment services, washrooms, and so on required by visitors enjoying the interpretive program.

The philosophy of VAMP also made a lot of sense. Its basis in market sensitivity, and especially in theories of marketing in a non-profit, service agency, struck a responsive chord right away, at least with those of us who had been struggling to achieve a balance between the mandate of our agency and what we knew from hard experience visitors needed.

In 1980, Howard and Crompton offered the following definition of a concept they called "Societal Marketing":

> "The justification for an agency's existence is the satisfaction of the client's wants *and the preservation of the long-term interests of the community.*[1]

It can be argued that the preservation of gene pools has a value above and beyond the needs of humans, but the preservation of significant cultural resources has absolutely no meaning outside the frame of society. Our mandate to study, conserve and/or restore nationally significant resources is our commitment to the long term interests of the community. But we also have a responsibility to respond to the needs of our immediate users.

In terms of its impact on historical resources and the protection of those resources, marketing theory, with its insistence on satisfying the customers (both visitors and society as a whole) and not numbers through the door, seemed a wise philosophy for us to pursue.

Once my colleagues and I began to understand what VAMP and service planning was all about, we realized it could hold the solutions to a number of problems in planning heritage resource programs that we have faced for a decade in this agency ... problems such as: how to simplify the planning process, how to prepare for evaluation, how to integrate all services to visitors, how to input directly to financial and other management approval systems, and how to ensure approval of plans by senior management. Last, but not least, it taught us the visitor's true place in all this.

This made us aware of our obligation to get the needs and subsequent servicing of the visitor back in balance with our protection activities. It involved altering our mindset.

For most of our history we have been resource-driven in our planning and management of parks, especially in N.H.P.& S.. Many millions of dollars have been spent on researching and devising ways to protect resources in the best way possible.

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[1] Howard, D.R., and Crompton, J.L. The Nature of Marketing in Recreation and Parks. In Brown, W.C., Financing, Managing and Marketing Recreation and Park Resources. Dubuque, Iowa. 1980. page 314.

We are internationally recognized experts in underwater archaeology, furniture conservation techniques, engineering history, and many other areas. Virtually nothing has been spent, however, on learning about and understanding our visitors and their needs.

In marketing terms, for most of our history we have been "product oriented". We protected our nationally significant resources and made some assumptions about what visitors would need at the parks; at best, we built washrooms, visitor centres and exhibits, put some people in uniform with muskets, and then sat back and waited for people to come and enjoy.

This worked to a certain extent when we were the only game in town. But society has developed very competitive attractions, like cable TV, VCR's, fast-food outlets, urban and farm family vacations, cheap airfare to Europe, and Club Meds. And now that provincial, municipal and even private operators are starting to take us on at our own game with costumed events, craft and cultural festivals, historic villages and historic theme parks, we could be in trouble.

There was also a time when we made the assumption that parks could be all things to all people, so that even when we did start advertising our product, we may have created some expectations that were impossible to fulfill - because we had a protection mandate that precluded unlimited development of our parks and sites, because we had little money, and because we had no idea who we were aiming at, or what their real needs were. We had moved into a "selling" orientation, but still had no marketing perspective.

The greatest danger in the whole scenario, however, was not that numbers through the door would decline - actually, we kept them up with some hardsell - **but that visitor satisfaction would decline**. We would get greater numbers of visitors coming through our doors and leaving with a ho-hum attitude. Mildly satisfied visitors do not write their Members of Parliament when we have to start closing sites and reducing services because of cutbacks. In fact, continuing cutbacks are a sign of a pretty well entrenched ho-hum attitude among the public towards our program.

We had to begin learning to understand who and where our most valuable markets are, and how to ensure their satisfaction.

CHALLENGES IN ADAPTING VAMP AND SERVICE PLANNING TO N.H.P.& S.

Adaption of the Visitor Activity Management Process to National Historic Parks and Sites should not pose a big challenge, although there are some minor issues to work out.

The implementation of VAMP and an understanding of its significance is somewhat more advanced in National Parks than it is in N.H.P.& S., at a national level. At an operational level, several of the regional offices, which have responsibility for all parts of the Canadian Parks Service program in their region of the country, have already produced implementation strategies for applying service planning to all parks, natural and cultural.

All regions and a number of National Historic Parks at the field level have also been involved in the testing and polishing of the process through service planning. Many have changed interpretive and visitor services job descriptions to reflect the Visitor Activity Management approach in name and in practice. This work has been monitored at a national level for several years. This year we have moved to a new level of commitment to VAMP which can be described by the three words: testing, liaising and training.

We're working cooperatively with the Visitor Activities Branch of National Parks and with a multi-level team developing courses and training staff to do service planning. Two major courses were held last year. Teams and individuals from sites across the country such as Fort Langley, Fort Rodd Hill, Motherwell Homestead, Fort Walsh, the Trent-Severn Waterway and the Halifax Citadel attended, along with a number of regional and headquarters specialists.

We are also participating in several historic park-based pilot projects in service planning, and reviewing products from others. The two main pilots are Fort Malden service planning in Ontario Region and Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Park service and management planning in Atlantic Region. Core and support teams for the pilot projects and other review are being drawn from the field sites, the regional offices, and from headquarters of N.H.P.& S. Staff from the Interpretation Branch have already participated on review teams, and we will also draw participants from other branches in headquarters.

What are we learning? The results are very preliminary and I should point out that the planning projects we have observed so far have been for small to medium-sized historic parks. We realize that the big parks could teach us more and different lessons.

- We are discovering that the segmentation of markets (the visitor activity groups) is remarkably similar for historic parks of these sizes. That finding alone will soon require a discussion paper.

- Opportunity assessment for historic parks is relatively easy. There are a limited number of activities available for visitors, or expected by visitors, to these sites. Other activities are quite clearly and understandably discouraged by the park purpose and mandate.

- Most of these parks seem to be doing a great job of interacting with their stakeholders and local constituents, and making effective use of partnerships and various cooperative ventures; or there exists great potential and opportunity to move into these activities.

- Generally, service planning has been easy to apply to historic parks because of the discrete nature of the resources, the ready availability of data on all facets of use and offer, and because of the reasons given above.

- Resource conservation specialists seem to be comfortable with the process and, having been involved in the planning, seem assured that resource protection is well addressed. What we are not happy about is that they are not able to point to a consistent, comprehensive cultural resource management process to quickly give planners information about limits and impacts.

- We are also learning that management plans are not doing what they could for us right now. Service planning should be given direction on regional marketing strategies and other aspects of policy. Management planning could easily take up this role.

I am also beginning to believe that VAMP could be a powerful tool in the implementation of our Systems Plan. A Preliminary Visitor Activity Evaluation would facilitate decisions about the type and scope of park acquisitions.

Through the pilot projects and review teams, we have been able to review, study, discuss and offer general strategies and proposals for adapting VAMP to National Historic Parks and Sites.

In headquarters, we are in the process of setting up a Visitor Activities Section to provide functional guidance to N.H.P.& S. through research and the development of tools, the development and monitoring of standards and guidelines, and training. Actually, we have created positions with five main areas of responsibility: research and development of tools; training and program development; communications; education/outreach; and partnerships and joint ventures. These positions reflect the priorities we perceive in moulding a more client-responsive organization.

There are some issues facing the implementation of VAMP in N.H.P.& S. None of these issues constitutes a serious problem. Adaptation of the service planning process to our needs is quite straightforward.

There is a bit of a challenge in market segmentation for N.H.P.& S. We are beginning to suspect that, in comparison to National Parks visitors, even at the outset we may need to delve a little deeper to discover the types of benefits people are seeking at historic parks and sites, including what motivates them and what the style of their visit means. We will have to direct our research efforts to gaining this understanding.

In an overall way, this understanding is being expanded by national marketing studies but there is still an important role for in-depth study of visitor motivation and the benefits sought. Some of this research may consist of bringing together a growing body of literature which already exists on these subjects. I think there is also a need for specific studies at our own sites, something which has not been done to date.

There are a few other technical hurdles. We are going to have to think a bit more about how to maintain market perspective in the development of storylines and programming, and how to teach this to planners and programmers. There is a research element implicit in these tasks, and an implication for the development of new training courses and training materials.

We face a challenge in finding the staffing resources to do service plans. Most of our small to medium-sized historic parks do not have the staff, or the staff skills, to handle any kind of serious planning. At the regional office level we have, at best, only 12 planners country-wide, but we have na emerging national strategy which suggests that our eighty-odd sites need to be planned in the next five years.

But the biggest issues, shared by National Parks and National Historic Parks and Sites, all relate to further development of VAMP.

Although it has become a cliché to say marketing requires a total commitment of everyone in an organization, it has become patently obvious to me that anything less will not work, and may turn into a disaster.

Sectors of the agency traditionally involved with research and preservation activity need to understand our responsibility to respond to clients, the ones who come to our sites and even those who do not, and that we now have a planning process which helps us balance visitor needs against our mandated objectives. Initially, there tends to be an unreasonable anxiety that market sensitivity means we have to start compromising our preservation standards. Quite the opposite is true: using preservation standards as a given, we can now seek ways to meet visitor needs ourselves, find others to meet those needs, or fully explain why we cannot meet them.

And speaking about planning, we want to avoid, at all costs, the impression that there are a plethora of different and divergent park planning processes, or, if you prefer, different and divergent decision-making processes in our agency. Park superintendents and senior management will not support us. Systems planning, management planning, service planning and natural and cultural resource conservation planning are all parts of one clearly defined, overall park planning process. In particular, service planning must follow from management planning, and be tied to management planning and management plan review schedules.

For the last two to three years, development of VAMP has been pursued through the development of the service planning process. This process is now working very well and a new edition of our planning handbook is making the rounds. There remains the task of fully integrating VAMP with the rest of the park planning process and with marketing activities throughout the agency.

National Parks and National Historic Parks have faced common problems as bureaucracies trying to make decisions and impart direction. At the site level at least, we have always shared a common understanding of the importance of visitors and their basic needs. Visitor services at both types of parks are determined by the needs of our public. The interpretive techniques and skills we employ are similar for the same reasons.

We must balance sometimes seemingly contradictory objectives for preservation and use. Now we at C.P.S. have a new formal tool for incorporating marketing principles into our planning. Market sensitivity, sensitivity to the satisfaction of our visitors, while ensuring significant resources will be around for future generations, applies as surely to the management of a modest historic house on a quiet urban street, as it does to the management of a majestic mountain park.

READINGS ON THE VISITOR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS (VAMP)

6. Reynolds, R.J. 1990

"VAMP and its Application to Camping: The Glacier National Park Example" in Towards Serving Visitors and Managing Our Resources, Proceedings of a North American Workshop on Visitor Management in Parks and Protected Areas, Tourism Research and Education Centre, University of Waterloo and Environment Canada, Parks Service.

VAMP AND ITS APPLICATION TO CAMPING: THE GLACIER NATIONAL PARK EXAMPLE

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INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses a specific application of the Visitor Activity Management Process in Glacier National Park, British Columbia.

The planning team is currently in the final stages of preparing a Service Plan for the park. The purpose of this paper is to provide the workshop with an example of how our planning team has approached the implementation of VAMP. I have chosen to focus my comments on the activity known as frontcountry camping to illustrate how the Visitor Activity Management Process was applied in Glacier.

BACKGROUND

Glacier is a 1400 sq. km. park in the Columbia Mountains of southeastern British Columbia. The park is a rugged and primitive wilderness of glaciers, icefields, 3000-metre peaks and valley rainforests. This wilderness is bisected by the Trans-Canada Highway and a thin corridor of frontcountry facilities associated with it.

There are three frontcountry campgrounds along the highway corridor, with a total of almost 400 campsites. The park's campgrounds are known for their rustic character, reflecting Glacier's image as a wilderness area. The campgrounds are semi-serviced, offering campsites, washroom buildings, running water, kitchen shelters and firewood supplies, but no r.v. hook-ups or showers.

Illecillewaet and Loop Brook campgrounds are located in Rogers Pass, at the heart of the park. Illecillewaet is a 52-site campground and the most popular of the three, with an average occupancy of 82%. Loop Brook, with 20 campsites, also averages between 75 and 85%. Both of these campgrounds rank highly with our visitors, primarily because of their settings in scenic subalpine valleys, and because of the high quality recreational opportunities associated with them (hiking, mountaineering, and backpacking). Use of Illecillewaet and Loop Brook has been increasingly slightly for three years, after a four year decline.

The largest campground in the park is Mountain Creek, with 306 campsites. It is located in a wide valley, about 20 km. from Rogers Pass. This campground has not averaged more than 15% occupancy in the past eight years and use is continuing to decline slowly.

PROFILE OF GLACIER'S CAMPERS

Camping is considered one of the most important services offered in Glacier. Camping is more than just low-cost accommodation for most of our visitors. It is an integral part of the national park experience. For this reason, we've spent a considerable amount of time over the past few years studying our campers. We've found that frontcountry campers using Glacier are seeking a relatively gentle and comfortable introduction to the rugged wilderness of the park. Although this is certainly a generalization, it does fit the profile of most of our frontcountry campers.

- our campers originate primarily in southern Alberta and British Columbia, with substantial numbers from the U.S., Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and West Germany.
- our campers are primarily young adults, young families and senior citizens, and we've received considerable interest from disabled visitor groups.
- roughly 65% of our campers are travelling by recreational vehicle and 35% are tenting.

Expectation and satisfaction surveys done in the park revealed that, of the visitors using our campgrounds, a very high percentage were extremely satisfied with their camping experience.

(1) At Illecillewaet and Loop Brook, campers were most satisfied with
- the scenery and setting
- the recreational opportunities nearby
- the layout of their individual campsites
- the personal reception/information services
- the personal interpretation services

They were least satisfied with
- the mix of r.v. users and tenters
- the lack of amenities (showers, dry firewood, etc.)

(2) At Mountain Creek, campers were most satisfied with
- the layout of their individual campsites
- the personal reception/information services
- the separation of r.v. users and tenters

They were least satisfied with
- the lack of nearby recreational opportunities
- the background noise of the nearby transportation route
- the lack of interpretation services
- the lack of amenities (showers, dry firewood, etc.)

By definition, of course, these surveys only gave us information on visitors who actually use our campgrounds. Right now, we do not have information on people who have stopped using our campgrounds, or people who have never used them.

Our surveys and observations also revealed that communication of park messages to this group is critical, as

- many have little time to spend in the park
- many have little awareness of our services and opportunities
- many have limited high mountain outdoor skills
- many of our resource management and visitor management concerns are generated by this group

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

The draft Park Management Plan for Glacier identified two major campground issues to be resolved in detail in the park service plan:

- the package of opportunities and services offered at Illecillewaet should be fine-tuned and upgraded

- the problem of chronic underuse of Mountain Creek should be resolved

Our Service Plan, by comparing what visitors need to what they currently receive, highlighted the strengths and weaknesses in our existing program, and a number of opportunities to provide new services. These strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities fell into four major categories: recreation, communications, support services, and services, and services for the disabled.

Recreation

Strengths

- small size & rustic character (Ill., Loop)
- physical layout of campground (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)
- scenery in and around campground (Ill., Loop)
- accessibility to recreational opportunities (Ill., Loop)
- separation of r.v. users and tenters (Mtn.)

Weaknesses/ Opportunities

- mix of r.v. users and tenters (Ill., Loop)
- lack of nearby recreational opportunities (Mtn.)

Communications

Strengths

- personal reception/info services (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)
- personal interpretation services (Ill.)
- camping trip planning services (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)
- visitor comment services (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)

Weaknesses/ Opportunities

- poor highway directional signage (Ill.,Loop Mtn.)
- personal reception/info. only 8 hrs/day (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)
- personal registration only 8 hrs/day (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)
- no 24-hr information/interpretation exhibits (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)
- no off-season reception/information/interpretation services (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)
- no personal interpretation services (Loop, Mtn.)
- no self-guiding interpretative trails (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)
- no information exhibits at nearby trailheads (Ill.)
- no campground reservation services (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)

Support Services

Strengths

- washrooms (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)
- kitchen shelters (Ill., Loop)
- water supplies (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)
- public safety services (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)
- garbage collection/cleaning services (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)

Weaknesses/ Opportunities

- firewood distribution and quality (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)
- lack of kitchen shelters (Mtn.)
- unsafe access from highway (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)
- unorganized trailhead/campground parking (Ill.)
- opportunity to develop showers ((Ill., Loop, Mtn.)
- lack of trailer sani-station (Ill.)

Services for the Disabled

Weaknesses/ Opportunities

- no special services are provided (Ill., Loop, Mtn.)

STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE

Our inventory of the existing situation, examination of visitor needs and analysis of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities summarized the current status of the campgrounds. The next stages of the plan would define the future of the campgrounds and how that future could be achieved.

The first step was to set the objective for campgrounds, which was not necessarily to bring more visitors through the turnstiles, but to serve our camping clientele better.

BASIC LEVELS OF SERVICE

Based on known visitor needs and our objective, we established the basic level of service that we will provide in our campgrounds. These basic levels of service also act as performance indicators, measuring our success at serving our camping clientele.

The basic level of service that we established for Illecillewaet included the following:

- 52 campsites will be open and maintained, personal and non-personal communication services will be provided, and support services will be open and maintained from June 10 to Sept. 15
- 6 campsites, 1 washroom, 1 kitchen shelter and all communication services will be upgraded to disabled accessible standards

The basic level of service that we established for Loop Brook included the following:

- 20 campsites will be open and maintained, personal and non-personal communication services will be provided, and support services will be open and maintained from June 30 to Sept. 8

The basic level of service that we established for Mountain Creek included the following:

- 100 campsites will be open and maintained, personal and non-personal communication services will be provided, and support services will be open and maintained from June 30 to Sept. 8

ACTION PLANS

With our objective in mind of better serving the camper, and having set these basic levels of service, we developed a series of action plans to help us reach these goals.

First, we made a conscious effort to build on the existing strengths of the campgrounds:

- retain the rustic character of the campgrounds
- do not expand the campgrounds
- retain the site layout of the campgrounds
- retain the recreational opportunities near Ill. and Loop
- retain the personal reception/information/interpretation services
- retain the washrooms, kitchen shelters, and water supplies

Second, we prepared a list of proposed actions to improve the services offered to visitors:

- close and rehabilitate 200 campsites at Mountain Creek
- separate the tent and r.v. sites at Illecillewaet and Loop
- develop hiking opportunities at Mountain Creek
- improve campground identification signage along the highway
- develop outdoor orientation/information/interpretation exhibits at each campground
- develop self-guiding interpretive trails at Illecillewaet and Mountain Creek
- develop an off-hours/off-season self-registration system
- develop a trailhead information kiosk at Illecillewaet
- investigate the potential for development of reservation services
- investigate the potential for development of showers
- improve firewood quality and distribution system
- develop kitchen shelters at Mountain Creek
- develop trailhead/campground parking at Illecillewaet
- convert the campsites and support services at Illecillewaet to provide a package of services for the disabled

We are currently in the process of priorizing this list of projects and initiating the Environmental Assessment and Review Process for the plan.

Of course the real measure of success will be implementation rather than just completion of the plan. That is the challenge that the park faces over the next five years.

APPENDIX: AN APPLICATION OF THE VISITOR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS IN SERVICE PLANNING

ILLECILLEWAET CAMPGROUND ANALYSIS
GLACIER NATIONAL PARK
(Excerpt from Glacier National Park Draft Service Plan)

A. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

EXISTING SITUATION

camping facilities an services

- 52 campsites (tent pads, parking stalls, picnic tables, firepits)
- 2 washroom buildings (flush toilets, cold running water)
- 2 kitchen shelters (picnic tables, fireplaces)
- 2 pit privies
- 1 central wood supply
- 2 central garbage bins
- 2 water supply points

information/interpretation facilities and services

- 2 campground information exhibits
- personal reception/information services
  (8 hours/day, campground reception attendant)
- personal interpretation services
  (5 guided hikes/week, park interpreter)

associated recreational facilities and opportunities

- 9 backcountry trails radiate from the campground
  (day-hiking, backpacking, mountaineering)
  (trails range from 1 km to 6 km in length)
- fishing, bicycling, picnicking, nature appreciation can be found in and around the campground

season of operation

- summer camping (June 10 to Sept 30)
- hiking, climbing, backpacking (June 15 to Oct 15)
- winter camping (Oct 31 to May 15)
- skiing (Oct 31 to May 15)

character of campground

- a rustic, semi-serviced campground, located one km from the Trans Canada Highway in a subalpine valley enclosed by 3,000 m peaks, glaciers, icefields, and avalanche paths

- 75% of sites usually occupied by frontcountry campers (both overnight and long term), and r.v. users
- 25% of sites are usually occupied by backcountry users, such as hikers and climbers using the campground as a base camp

levels of use

- Illecillewaet averages 82% occupancy during July and August and 50% occupancy during June and September
- average length of stay is 1.5 nights
- average number of party nights is 4,300 per year

levels of satisfaction

- a camper satisfaction survey during the 1987/88 and 1988/89 summer seasons revealed very high levels of satisfaction with the Illecillewaet camping experience
- visitors are most satisfied with the scenery, recreational opportunities, individual campsites, and personal reception services, and least satisfied with the mix of camping types and the lack of showers and hot water

VISITOR PROFILE

Frontcountry campers in Glacier National Park are generally seeking a relatively gentle and comfortable introduction to the rugged wilderness of the Columbia Mountains. Because Illecillewaet is a rustic campground, it appeals to the camper who is seeking more of a primitive experience than a fully serviced commercial campground would offer.

PROFILE HIGHLIGHTS

total size of group	- 12,900 visitors
origins	- primarily from southern Alberta and southern British Columbia, with substantial numbers from Ontario, Manitoba, the U.S., and Germany
age	- young adults, young families, and senior citizens
composition of group	- 60% families, 40% individuals and couples
travel characteristics	- 10% destination, 90% en route to other locations
use trends	- heaviest use on weekends in June, July, August - medium heavy use on weekdays in July, and August - light use on weekdays in June and throughout Sept

important characteristics

- visitors in this group often have limitations in terms of time to spend in the park, awareness of services, or skill levels
- as many resource or visitor management issues are generated in this group, it is important to communicate management messages efficiently and effectively to them
- a very large contingent of this group requires special services
    - senior citizens
    - disabled visitors
    - visitors with languages other than English or French

VISITOR NEEDS

pre-trip

- advance knowledge of the location of park, park opportunities, facilities and services, fees, restrictions, regulations, and skill and equipment requirements

en-route

- accurate highway directional signage
- campground vacancy reports

arrival

- a friendly reception
- a broad orientation to park and campground
- current information on park and campground
- detailed information on other opportunities, facilities, and services

during activ[illegible]

- orientation/information
    - activity schedules
    - directional signage
    - an explanation of regulations
    - fee information
- recreation
    - campsite (level, private, well-drained, with good views)
    - support services
        - wood

        - water
        - washrooms
        - parking
        - kitchen shelters
        - showers
        - sani-dumping station
    - associated recreational opportunities
        - trails
        - playgrounds
        - rivers
    - safety services
        - first aid station
        - campground patrols
        - natural hazard information

- education
    - presentation of themes and messages (guided hikes, campground talks, roving interpreters, publications, self-guided trails, exhibits, films)

- departure
    - feedback opportunities
        - comment forms
        - surveys
        - registers

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Strengths

- small size and rustic nature of the campground
- physical layout of the campground and individual campsites
- scenery in and surrounding the campground (mountains, glaciers, rivers, forests)
- accessibility to recreational opportunities (hiking, climbing, nature appreciation)
- personal reception and information services
- level, well-drained and private campsites
- support services (first aid, campground patrols)
- interpretation services (guided hikes, publications)
- camping trip planning services
- vacancy reporting system
- feedback opportunities (comment forms, surveys)

Weaknesses

- poor highway directional signage
- no 24-hour registration services (self-reg.)
- no 24-hour reception, orientation, information services (info exhibits)
- no base of operations for campground personal service staff
- no off-season services
- no separation of tenters and r.v. users
- lack of soft tent pads
- poor firewood distribution
- poor firewood quality
- poor coordination of visitor use and facility cleaning schedule
- lack of trailhead parking
- lack of trailhead information services

Opportunities

- campground reservation services
- campground registration/information centre
- showers, electricity, hot water, light in washrooms
- sani-station
- playground
- campground talks
- roving interpreters
- self-guiding trails
- exhibits
- services for disabled visitors

B. STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE

BASIC LEVEL OF SERVICE

- 52 campsites and all campground support services will be open and maintained from Jun 10 to Sept 30

- 52 campsites will be open for unserviced shoulder season camping from Sept 30 to Oct 31

- 52 campsites will be open for unserviced winter season camping from Oct 31 to May 15

- personal reception, registration, orientation and information services will be available in English, French and German, 12 hours per day from June 10 to Sept 30

- personal interpretation services will be provided in English and French once a day from June 10 to Sept 30

- non-personal reception, orientation, information and interpretation services will be available 24 hours a day from June 10 to Oct 31

- self-registration services will be available 12 hours per day from June 10 to Sept 30

- facility identification signage, camping trip planning services, reservation services and feedback services will be available year-round

- associated recreational and educational facilities will be open and maintained as weather permits

- Illecillewaet will be designated as accessible to the disabled
    - 8.5% of campsites
    - 1 trail
    - 1 washroom
    - 1 kitchen shelter
    - all communication services

OVERALL ACTION PLAN

- Build on the campground's strengths
- do not expand the campground
- retain the rustic character
- retain the layout of the campground and campsites
- retain the nearby recreational opportunities
- retain the personal reception, information and interpretation services
- retain the associated public communication services
- retain the washrooms and kitchen shelters
- retain the public safety services

Action Plans for Recreational Services

- reorganize the campground to separate tenters and r.v. users
- upgrade and improve tent pads
- upgrade Meeting of the Waters Trail near the campground
- develop practice rock climbing area near the campground
- develop children's adventure playground

Action Plans for Communications Services

- develop a campground orientation/information centre

- develop an outdoor orientation/information/interpretation exhibit at centre
- develop a 24-hour self-registration system at centre
- develop a reservation system for the campground
- develop self-guiding interpretive media for Meeting of the Waters Trail
- upgrade highway signage
- develop an orientation/information exhibit at the major trailhead
- develop a venue for campground interpretive talks
- highlight the campground in targeted promotional packages
    - families
    - senior citizens
    - disabled visitors
    - non-destination visitors
    - off-season visitors

Action Plans for Support Services

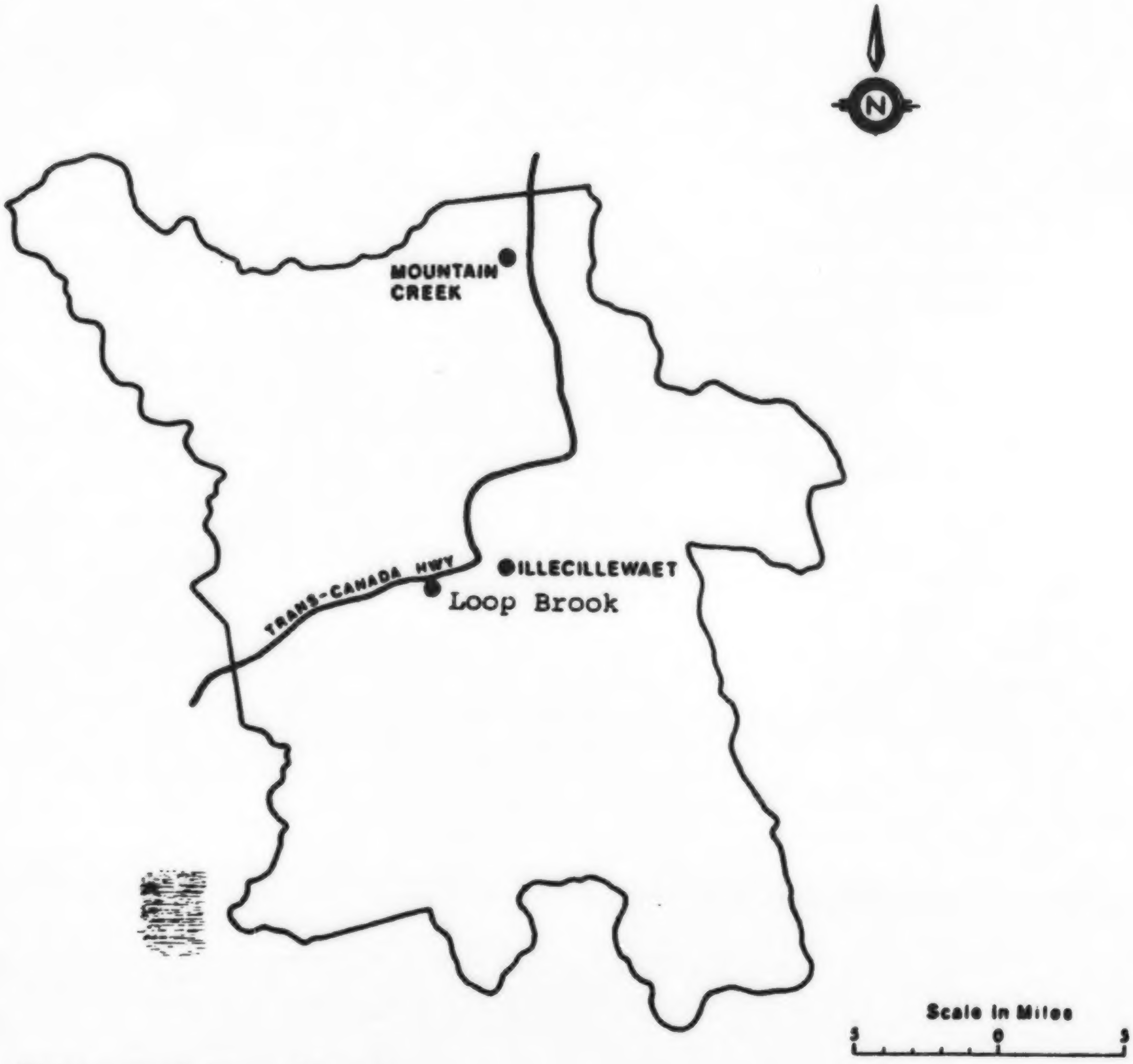
- improve parking for campground, info-centre and trailhead
- improve firewood quality and distribution system
- investigate the potential for installing showers
- investigate the potential for adding electricity, heat and light to washrooms
- develop sani-station for campground
- coordinate campground cleaning schedule with visitor use periods
- coordinate campground services season with periods of visitor demand

Action Plans for Services for the Disabled

- convert six campsites to accessible standards
- upgrade Meeting of the Waters Trail to accessible standards
- design new Meeting of the Waters interpretation media to accessible standards
- convert one washroom and one kitchen shelter to accessible standards
- design info-centre and firewood distribution system to standards
- designate Illecillewaet Area as disabled-accessible

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

Canadian Parks Service


N
MOUNTAIN CREEK
TRANS-CANADA HWY
ILLECILLEWAET
Loop Brook
Scale in Miles
5
0
5

Campground Locations ●

READINGS ON THE VISITOR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS (VAMP)

7. Feick, J. 1988

"**Planning to Improve Service to Visitors in Canada's National Parks**" in *Heritage Interpretation*, Vol.2, The Visitor Experience, Bellhaven Press.

11

Planning to Improve Service to Visitors in Canada's National Parks

Jenny Feick

For over one hundred years Canada's national park system has grown in extent and sophistication. From its initial beginnings as areas of tourism development in a sea of wilderness to its present state as islands of wild landscape amidst an exploited countryside, the Canadian Park Service's policies and ways of planning for public use have evolved.

National parks staff in Canada have excelled in planning for the care and protection of their natural resources in the past twenty years. To balance this, and in order to secure a place in the minds of the voting public, the Canadian Parks Service is turning to a new way of looking at parks – the visitors' perspective.

The 'Visitor Activity Management Process' is exactly that, a process to manage visitor activities which examines what visitors need in order to take part safely in and enjoy an appropriate activity within parks. In many ways, it is a marketing approach, since it examines client needs and wants, and tries to ensure that what parks offer is packaged in such a way as to satisfy its customers.

The first phase of implementing this process involved extensive visitor surveys in Atlantic Canada, and some planning work in national historic parks in the province of Quebec. A pilot service planning project was then undertaken for the western region (Alberta and British Columbia) of Canada's national park system. It involved the preparation of a 'Visitor Activities Service Plan' for Mount Revelstoke and Glacier national parks in British Columbia's interior mountains.

A service plan functions as a management tool. It translates the conceptual directions in the park management plans into how and when to provide services, including heritage interpretation, to visitors. It provides a comprehensive package on how a park can best offer services for its various types of visitors. The plan is a lean, decision-oriented document which links directly to the Canadian Parks Service's approval systems for financial and human resources. It stresses action, is updated annually, and is reviewed every five years.

The superintendent of Mount Revelstoke and Glacier national parks, involved every manager in the development of the plan. A service planning training course was held in March 1987 prior to initiating the project. All park managers, as well as advisors in the regional office in Calgary, Alberta, were consulted throughout the plan's preparation. Involving the managers instead of hiring a planner of consultant, meant reshuffling roles and responsibilities within the organization. As usual, such changes cause some problems and some opportunities for individuals. However, everyone was convinced that the plan, once finished, would prove its worth, and involving managers would ensure greater commitment to the plan's implementation.

The process of producing a service plan involves the following seven basic steps:

Stage 1: Terms of Reference

Stage 1 is to produce a *terms of reference*. This requires a description of what you plan to do and how you are going to do it, and commitment must be secured from other participants.

Stage 2: Review the Current Situation

Stage 2 reviews the current situation and produces the database.

This part of the process can take at least six months, subject to the amount of market information about visitors. Parks that have existing marketing plans and visitor surveys will find this phase quicker and easier.

The team compiled and organized existing socio-economic data developing a market segmentation approach to the visitors, lumping groups with common expectations and activities into six categories which were ranked in order of importance:

Frontcountry users – the largest market of real park users; those who picnic, stop at roadside viewpoints, camp in major camp grounds, walk the self-guiding trails, visit the Rogers Pass Information Centre, drive the Summit Drive to the top of Mount Revelstoke, or who ski or toboggan near the base of Mount Revelstoke. They often have less than a day to spend in either park, and many share concerns about venturing into the rugged wilderness beyond the Trans Canada Highway or Summit Drive.

Offsite groups – this small group uses the park as an educational resource, and supports the educational mandate of the Canadian Parks Service. They request special interpretive programmes outside the parks' boundaries, or written and/or photographic assistance with school projects and research. They may visit the parks as a result of the off-site or extension service provided for them by park interpreters.

Wilderness enthusiasts – this small but keen group loves the challenge of

Figure 11.1 Mount Revelstoke National Park. How do you interpret the rugged back-country effectively? This is an issue dealt with by the service plan.

hiking, backpacking, mountain biking, ski touring, mountaineering and caving in the backcountry areas of the wild Columbia Mountains preserved by Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Park. They often seek very detailed information on natural history and skill and equipment requirements prior to their trip. Participants in the all-day interpretive hikes into the backcountry also form part of this group.

Through travellers – this enormous group of people pass through the two parks on the Trans Canada Highway, or as passengers on VIA Rail along the Canadian Pacific Transcontinental Railway. Any interest they take in the parks is incidental; they are on their way somewhere else. They are usually in a hurry and dislike sharing the road with tourists slowing down to look at the scenery or to stop at a visitor facility. They make up the majority of the people on the highway access into the parks, especially during the avalanche season from November to April.

Waterway users – this tiny group combines the desire for physical challenge with a short time frame and a front-country venue. The few river experiences the parks offer canoeists, kayakers and rafters are short and dangerous.

Along with this market segmentation, a visitor survey was initiated to test how the parks were meeting the expectations of our visitors. This confirmed many of the staff's gut feelings, but also provided a few surprises. Many people prayed that the parks would not become another Banff National Park, with its crowded, commercial areas. They complained about the poor directional signage, dangerous intersections, the lack of showers and campfire talks in camp grounds, and the weather. They praised the park interpretive programmes self-guiding trails and Rogers Pass Information Centre, the hospitable park staff, the clean facilities and the scenery.

Service planning step number two also meant reviewing the immense database which dealt with the parks' heritage resources, and developing theme statements, park stories and messages – the basis for a parks communications programme. Again, it was necessary to decide which themes and messages had to assume the highest priority, and which were less important to communicate to every visitor.

The park themes developed for the two parks are: hard rock mountains carpeted by lush rain forests and Alpine Meadows (Mount Revelstoke National Park); a wilderness fortress of icy barriers and thundering snows (Glacier National Park).

Themes included both natural and human history topics relevant to each park. Some of these themes, such as 'Rain Forest, Snow Forest, No Forest – the Columbia Mountains Lifezones', applied to both parks, even though this one formed a more significant part of the story of Mount Revelstoke National Park. Others, like 'the Birthplace of North American Mountaineering' or 'Karst Anomaly – the Nakimu Caves Story', applied only to one park, in these two cases, Glacier.

Management messages ranged from explaining the avalanche control programme in operation unique to the Rogers Pass area of the Trans Canada Highway to the changing national stand on forest fire management with national parks. Ensuring that visitors received information on opportunities for recreational and educational opportunities, as well as skill and equipment requirements, and public safety warning were all top priorities.

In the last major part of step number two, it was necessary to clarify the existing visitor provision in the parks (how many picnic areas, how many interpretive exhibits on what themes etc.), as well as what the surrounding region offers to visitors (both complementary services like marinas, helicopter hiking and downhill ski areas, and similar services such as camp grounds and picnic areas). Opportunities that could be developed were listed, such as new hiking trails or a mountaineering ski equipment rental and guiding service. The park wardens helped note any environmental and/or public safety concerns associated with existing or potential services to visitors.

Analyse the Database

The next step is the process of analysing the database and identifying shortfalls, gaps in service and issues to resolve. Not surprisingly hundreds of issues emerged – too many to resolve in the planning exercise. Some issues, such as national policies and fees, had to be 'sent upstairs' to Head Office to deal with. Others were lower priority items which could wait for a few years (nice

Figure 11.2 Glacier National Park. One of the objectives of service planning is to ensure that visitors can travel safely in dangerous areas, like glaciers, by being well informed about skill and equipment requirements before setting off.

to have but not essential according to present statistics and/or safety concerns, for example portages along the Beaver River or Nordic ski trails in Glacier). All service-related issues were organized into categories based on the six visitor activity groups' critical needs within the next five-year time period.

The gap-finding exercise was interesting. This identified that there was not overall orientation to the park story of Glacier National Park at the major visitor focal point, the Rogers Pass Information Centre. The history of Rogers Pass was interpreted well, and through the movie *Snow War* the tale of avalanches was told. An even more serious concern was the fact that there was almost no interpretation at Mount Revelstoke National Park; the information centre and interpretive programmes at Glacier National Park drained the existing resources of the interpretive service. It also became clear that services had been cut back to off-site groups, as resources got tighter. These groups included many local children, who could influence the future of parks as they reached voting age. There was also limited information to waterway users, yet staff participated in a few rescues each year, sometimes involving fatalities. Dangerous intersections, poor directional signage and a lack of key amenities, such as showers in the camp grounds were confirmed as issues to be dealt with.

Stage 4: Develop Measurable Objectives and Goals

The fourth stage is to develop measurable objectives and overall goals for providing services to visitors. This was done in parallel with the listing of shortfalls and issues' taking advice and direction from the superintendent, the draft management plans for the two parks, and regional office specialists.

The objectives provided measurable targets within the basic service areas:

- increase visitation during times of year and in places where the environment could withstand more use without damage.
- promote awareness of the two parks and the Columbia Mountains, a mountain region of Canada much less well known than the Rockies to the east.
- provide excellent pre-trip planning information to potential visitors.
- provide excellent reception, orientation and information on the recreational and educational opportunities available in the two parks.
- provide excellent recreational opportunities appropriate to the rugged wilderness character of each park.
- provide excellent and varied educational opportunities through personal and non-personal means so that visitors could appreciate and experience the park themes and messages.
- provide excellent support facilities and safe access to these opportunities.
- provide opportunities for all users of park facilities and services to give comments and suggestions for improvement of facilities and services.
- provide excellent educational services to off-site groups, especially in the local area.
- provide opportunities for people to volunteer and otherwise co-operate or co-venture with the parks, such as by participating in the Friends of Mount Revelstoke and Glacier.
- integrate and co-operate with the local communities of Revelstoke and Golden, in order to provide a good all-round experience for visitors to the area.

Stage 5: An Overall Service Strategy

Stage 5 is the production of an overall service strategy.

This is the most enjoyable part of the planning exercise – coming up with solutions [illegible] problems, resolving issues and developing strategies. Obviously there are differences of opinion regarding which services to assign the highest priority, or which trails should no longer be maintained if or when more budget cuts occur. The end result was numerous flip chart sheets summarizing the basic goals, critical base data and issues related to them, and strategies and implementation/action plans for each issue.

Stage 6: Writing the Service Plan

The sixth stage is the actual writing of the service plan. From day one all the data was gathered on computer file using the word processor as a means of continually updating and revising the draft sections of the plan as it was developed. Thus, a draft plan up to the identification of issues and objectives could be quickly finalized with the material generated from the flip chart sheets.

Stage 7: Review and Assessment

The final stage involves reviewing and assessing the document, making revisions and seeking final approval.

Even in its draft form the service plan has:

(1) helped park managers identify and respond to the needs of their visitors;
(2) provided an integrated approach to planning and delivering interpretation, and other visitor services in a safe and environmentally sensitive manner;
(3) encouraged a team approach to park management;
(4) helped managers make better decisions and assisted them in defending these decisions by justifying and prioritizing them;
(5) allowed them to apply marketing principles and techniques to programme planning;
(6) translated directly into action for annual operational work plans, as well as more long-range funding requests;
(7) helped plan for and manage change in leisure patterns and socioeconomic trends.

As this new approach was pioneered growing pains were expected. There were some frustrating moments as things were tried manually, only to discover that they were cumbersome, unnecessary and/or excessively time-consuming. The biggest difficulty was enabling the two key players, both managers, to have sufficient backup staff support to allow them time to contribute meaningfully to the project, and keep the other managers informed and supportive of the project.

The pilot project tested the waters and found them navigable. Several other parks in western region – Kootenay and Yoho in the Rocky Mountains – are near completion with their own service planning projects. They have been able to forge ahead more quickly, applying knowledge gained in the project in Mount Revelstoke and Glacier national parks. Many other national parks, as well as two of the region's national historic parks, are starting service planning. Other regions of Canada, especially Ontario and Prairie Regions, have also embarked up this new, commonsense approach to planning within the Canadian Parks Service.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

1. anon. 1988
Getting Started: A Guide to Service Planning, Environment Canada, Canadian Parks Service.

2. anon. 1985
Management Process for Visitor Activities, Environment Canada, Canadian Parks Service.

For more information, contact:

National Parks Documentation Centre
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